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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

MELVILLE AND ROMANTIC SUBJECTIVITY

by

PAUL IVAR HJARTARSON

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF ARTS

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled .... MELVILLE AND ROMANTIC SUBJECTIVITY ....

submitted by .... PAUL IVAR HJARTARSON ....

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of .... ARTS ....

.... Morton L. Ross ....
Supervisor

....

....

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ABSTRACT

That Melville's fiction is thematically and stylistically subjective has been recognized by an increasing number of scholars in recent years. There has, however, been considerable disagreement among them concerning the nature of that subjectivity and its import in Melville's fiction. In this thesis I examine Melville's fiction in relation to the Romantic concern with subjectivity and the growth of the mind, and, in doing so, attempt to set forth a context within which the subjective nature of Melville's fiction can be more adequately understood. In Chapter One I examine two parallel developments in Melville scholarship; the recognition that Melville's fiction is thematically and stylistically subjective, and, related to that, the critical insistence on the need for objectivity in evaluating that fiction. Both developments can, I argue, be set within the context of the concern, since the Enlightenment, with objectivity as a problem, as something to be achieved. In Chapter Two the problem of objectivity is discussed in the context of the Romantic concern with subjectivity and the growth of the mind and in relation to the Romantics' search for what Ralph Waldo Emerson, for example, terms a "valid subjectivity." Melville's comments concerning the nature and function of art, particularly his comments concerning the nature of the artist's relation to his artwork and his readers, are examined in Chapter Three in order to determine the extent to which his views correspond

to those in Romantic thought and literature regarding subjectivity and the growth of the mind. In Chapter Four I examine Moby-Dick in relation to the Romantic conception of the growth of the mind and to the distinctively Romantic form of the autobiography to which that conception gave rise. In the concluding chapter Pierre is discussed as a reworking of Moby-Dick and as Melville's final statement of the vanity of attempting to popularize profundities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In Mardi: And A Voyage Thither Melville's first-person narrator, Taji, declares that, "like a frigate," he is "full with a thousand souls;"

> and as on, on, on, I scud before the wind, many mariners rush up from the orlop below, like miners from caves; running shouting across my decks; opposite braces are pulled; and this way and that, the great yards swing round on their axes; and boisterous speaking-trumpets are heard. (M, 366)

Like Taji, every student of Melville's fiction must necessarily be aware of the "joint-stock" nature of the venture in which he is involved and of the considerable debt he owes to those who have proceeded him and who, in one way or another, speak through him. My own debt to previous scholarship is evident on every page of this thesis. There are, however, some debts which cannot be adequately acknowledged either in a footnote or in a bibliographic entry. Such a debt I owe to Professor E.J. Rose who first introduced me to the study of Melville and who, in the enthusiasm he communicated as a teacher and in the rigorousness which marked his scholarship, encouraged me to undertake this thesis. No less a debt do I owe to Professor M.L. Ross who so patiently listened to the "Azzageddi" within me and who, in his graduate seminar on American literature, in his many comments on my thesis, and by the example of his own scholarship, has taught me both the value of and the difficulty involved in being both brief and concise, specific and accurate.

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CHAPTER ONE

MELVILLE AND SUBJECTIVITY

The conception of Herman Melville as a "natural genius," one who "never understood the art he practiced, but wrote out of the fullness of experience, and then, when memory and emotion were exhausted, could write no more," has given way, as Willard Thorp predicted it would, to the recognition of Melville as a self-conscious artist. "As we come to know his books for what they really are," asserted Thorp in 1938, the conception of Melville as a "natural genius"

> will have to give way to the truer picture of a writer who from the beginning of his career was occupied with the theme of the artist's problems and brooded over the nature of his own creative powers and their relation to the vital center of his spiritual life, until in much of his finest work this theme is deeply involved in the other mysteries with which he wrestled.[1]

Although Melville himself feared that he would "go down to posterity . . . as a 'man who lived among the cannibals,'" he is no longer primarily remembered as the writer of South Sea romances. Indeed, Typee, a book which, he remarked to Hawthorne, would in succeeding generations probably be given to children "with their gingerbread," is now largely ignored.[2] "Once past the adventure-peddling of Typee and Omoo," asserts Warner Berthoff in The Example of Melville (1962), Melville's "decisive inspiration as a writer was in [his] consuming inward growth."[3]

Since the early days of the Melville revival, scholars have, for the most part, slowly shifted their attention from a concern with and celebration of the "natural genius" of the early novels and from the South Sea adventures that inspired Melville to take up a literary career, to an examination of the self-conscious artistry of the later works and to Melville's own "consuming inward growth." My purpose in this introductory chapter is to examine the reasons for this shift and the directions in which Melville scholarship has developed as a result. Since 1938, the year in which Thorp asserted the need for a new conception of Melville, scholars have, I argue, become increasingly concerned with the necessity of overcoming what many regard as the undue subjectivity of previous, biographically-oriented Melville criticism and of focusing attention on the quality of the fiction itself and the skills of Melville's self-conscious craft. At the same time, however, scholarship has moved toward a greater recognition of the subjective nature of Melville's fiction; that is, toward the recognition that a relationship exists between Melville's own inward growth and the concern with self-discovery and realization in his fiction and between that concern and the style in which his fiction is written. Scholarship in one direction has stressed the need for objectivity while scholarship in the other has pointed to Melville's concern with subjectivity as the major factor shaping his fiction. Attempting to escape from the subjectivity of previous Melville commentary, contemporary scholars have been reluctant either to acknowledge that Melville's fiction is thematically or stylistically subjective or to attempt to account for that subjectivity. And yet, as Paul Brodtkorb Jr. pointed out almost a decade ago, the subjective nature of Melville's fiction cannot be ignored. In the following review of Melville scholarship I attempt to establish the existence of these two tendencies and to outline the need for a greater understanding of the nature of Melville's literary self-consciousness.

I The Problem of Objectivity in Melville Scholarship

Even in its early stages, the recognition of Melville as a self-conscious artist involved not only a new critical concern with the self-conscious artistry of his fiction, but a new self-conscious critical approach on the part of scholars as well. Out of this latter arose a question of what, in Symbolism and American Literature (1953), Charles Feidelson Jr. has termed the "modernity of Melville." "To all appearances," he observes, "it is not distinctively a literary quality."

> The Melville cult, since its beginning in the 1920's has been, consciously at least, a response not to an artist but to a man, a personality. Even the fairly sophisticated exegesis of recent years has tended to conceive the author of the novels as an archetypal modern man. He has been heard as the voice of one in trouble, yet full of ironic inflections, and his critics have discovered themselves in him. There is no doubt that Melville invites this sort of interpretation. He would seem a prime example of the demonic writer, carrying all before him by what he is rather than what he can do. He is often indifferent to the details of structure; his speculations are seldom profound

> and sometimes juvenile; he offers little variety of fictional character or situation. His greatest gift is a sense of tone and attitude, behind which we cannot help looking for an individual speaker; and this speaker, as it happens, can be taken as a very modern personality.[4]

The underlying argument here, reasserted again almost a decade later by Berthoff in The Example of Melville, is that Melville's readers are swayed more by the man than by his work; that is, more by the force of the personality perceived in and through the work than by the excellence of the work itself. "It is chiefly as a personality," observes Berthoff, "that Melville has been felt and rendered back to us by his most perceptive admirers--as if to illustrate his own notion that a writer's work is most meaningfully construed as an autobiographical cypher screening some otherwise unutterable testimony."[5]

This response is not simply a matter of the writer's life overshadowing his work. "On the contrary," Feidelson argues, "his work has been the most important source for his putative quality as a man."[6] Wary of the past attempts to discover the author in and through his fiction, Merlin Bowen stresses, in the introduction to The Long Encounter (1960), that his study of Melville's fiction neither attempts "to locate the sources of Melville's ideas and attitudes in the events of his personal life nor to reconstruct the pattern of that life from the evidence of the works themselves." Concerning this latter approach Bowen observes:

> That critics should have undertaken such a task once, when objective biographical materials were

> scarce and little was known of Melville's habits of composition, is understandable. In the absence of authentic history, myth will always step in. Thus, in the twenties and thirties, a number of biographer-critics, bent upon creating a writer 'complex, massive and original' enough to be capable of Moby-Dick, methodically dismantled the other books and used these materials as biographical data, often without either submitting them to historical tests or observing the aesthetic function they had performed in their proper place. The result was of course more revelatory of the biographers than of their subject.[7]

Similarly, Bowen objects to what he considers a related but "more sophisticated approach . . . which looks upon Melville's books as so many successive chapters in their author's intellectual or spiritual biography." Such "systematic spiritual biographers," he argues, are too often forced, however unconsciously, to assume a completed pattern in the author's life and works--including a "proper ending"--where one does not, in fact, exist.[8]

Like Feidelson and Berthoff, Bowen objects to what he considers the undue subjectivity of the concern with personality. In an effort to shift the focus of Melville scholarship from a question of personality to a concern with the artistry of the fiction itself, these scholars have attempted to deny, if not the validity of the response to personality, then the value of the critical approach that has arisen out of that response. "'Herman Melville (1819-91),'" asserts Feidelson, "remains largely unknown, so that all attempts to identify the omnipresent voice of the novels with Melville as he lived and breathed have been self-defeating."[9] Similarily, Berthoff argues: "we must allow that the actual person is unrecoverable, however vivid or intimate our impression of him."[10] Denying the efficacy of the concern with personality, each of these scholars attempts to establish a more objective basis from which to examine Melville's writings, a "modernity" devoid of the personality concerns of earlier Melville criticism.

That modernity they have, for the most part, discovered in the self-conscious artistry of Melville's fiction and in his concern with what Willard Thorp terms "the theme of the artist's problems." "What we have," Charles Feidelson insists,

> is a literary personality, a created figure who inhabits a created world. He is not a portrait of the man who lived in Pittsfield and New York, but a kind of presence--hardly a portrait--of the artist, the author; and his difficulties, whatever else they may include, are aesthetic quandaries. . . . From first to last he presents himself as an artist, and a conscious artist. It is in this character that he seizes our attention.[11]

Although Berthoff's interest in Melville differs markedly from that of either Thorp or Feidelson, he too insists that Melville's "modernity" is to be discovered in the self-conscious artistry of the fiction itself. "It is first of all as a writer, a master of expression," he argues, "that Melville remains with us, not as a philosopher, nor a phenomenon of intellectual and cultural history, nor even--however much one is wanted--as a provider of 'scripture.'"[12] In Melville's Angles of Vision (1972) A. Carl Bredahl Jr. argues that "Melville is much more than a thinker." He is, Bredahl insists, "an artist, a man conscious of the elements of his craft and able to use them to reflect thought in form."[13]

Although the conception of Melville as a self-conscious artist has resulted in a critical concern with the self-conscious artistry of the fiction itself and with the necessity of establishing a more objective basis from which to evaluate the quality of that fiction, there has, at the same time, been an increasing recognition of the subjective nature of Melville's fiction and of the difficulties involved in attempting an objective evaluation of it. Thus at the same time that Bowen appeals from the subjectivity of the concern with personality to what he terms "objective biographical materials," he recognizes and calls attention to the central importance of the concern with self in Melville's fiction. He, in fact, questions whether Melville's books are "stories or novels at all."

> Today, after more than a century, his popular fame is still that of a writer of sea-stories, though now of whaling rather than beachcombing. In either case, the label is misleading. It may be questioned whether his books are stories or novels at all, in the customary meaning of those words: certainly plot and character are not their strong points. Nor do all of them have to do with the sea. But there is one thing that all of them have in common, and that is a concern with the problem of self-discovery, self-realization. . . . If we are to understand him, we must meet him on this, the ground of his principal concern, and survey his work from here.[14]

What Bowen ultimately suggests is that the problem of self-discovery and realization is not only the ground of Melville's principal concern but the primary force shaping his fiction as well. Melville's "persistent concern" with self-discovery and realization, he argues, "helped to determine his subject-matter, his imagery, his view of character, the shape of his narratives, and his at times equivocal attitude towards his material."[15] Moreover Bowen suggests that it is this concern with the self which links Melville with the major writers of what F.O. Matthiessen terms the "American Renaissance."

The subjective nature of Melville's fiction has led more than one scholar to question, as Bowen does, whether Melville's books are stories or novels at all. In The Vision of Melville and Conrad: A Comparative Study (1970) Leon F. Seltzer argues that a number of Melville's works are "so deeply rooted in autobiography that it seems almost illegitimate to apply the conventional standards of prose fiction to them."[16] According to Feidelson, Melville is "often indifferent to the details of structure" and " . . . offers little variety of fictional character or situation." Melville's "greatest gift," Feidelson argues, "is a sense of tone or attitude, behind which we can not help looking for an individual speaker."[17] What characterizes that speaker, Berthoff points out, is that he is "rhapsodically or prophetically interjective of what he is in the process of discovering."[18] And what he is in the process of discovering, Berthoff suggests, is his own inner self. "It is a main part of our impression of him," he states, "that we should find him manfully absorbed . . . in the activity and astonishing development of his own mind, yet particularly without personal presumption in the matter."[19]

As these comments suggest, the argument most frequently advanced is less that Melville's works are sui generis than that they are, in Edgar Dryden's words, "an expression of the progressive unfolding of the self." "To read Melville's fiction, Dryden argues, " . . . is to encounter, in James's words, 'the growth of his whole operative consciousness.'"[20] In The Example of Melville Berthoff, in fact, suggests that Melville's novels are best understood in relation to the Romantic concern with the "growth of the mind" and to the autobiographical works to which that conception gave rise. Indeed, he argues that the primary concern of Melville's novels after Typee and Omoo is the "growth of the mind." What is more, Berthoff locates the source of that concern in Melville's own rapid inward development.

> I want to make this point about Melville's growth as emphatically as possible, for it seems to me central to an accurate understanding of the shape of his career. The event that effectively opened the larger world of human action and sentiment to him as a writer, including the random world of his own youthful adventuring, was the rapid unfolding and expansion, in the years between Typee and Moby-Dick, of his own mind. It is not just that this event increased his personal resources or gave him a surer private measure of emotional truth and intellectual seriousness. More significantly, it gave him an intense and yet objective personal experience of one of the great creative conceptions of his era--by which I mean the conception of the 'growth of the mind,' as the earlier nineteenth century understood that phrase.[21]

This point becomes for Berthoff central not only to an accurate understanding of the shape of Melville's career, but to a thorough appreciation of the works themselves.

What Berthoff suggests is that there is a direct correlation between Melville's "consuming inward growth" and the subject-matter and style of his fiction. The recognition of a relation between the events of Melville's own personal life and the world of his fiction is not entirely new. Indeed, the assumption of such a relationship is at the basis of the persistent tendency to identify Melville with the first-person narrators of his novels and to read his fiction as if it were, in some sense, autobiographical. As an early admirer of Melville's fiction noted, Melville appears always to write "out of his heart and out of wide and perhaps bitter experience," and this view has persisted despite the fact that Melville is currently regarded by commentators not as a "natural genius" but as a "self-conscious artist."[22]

What is new, however, is Berthoff's assertion of the self-conscious nature of Melville's concern with self-discovery and realization and his argument that Melville wrote "without personal presumption in the matter." These assertions argue a conception of Melville quite different from that which underlies much of previous Melville commentary. For example, Berthoff's assertion that Melville wrote "without personal presumption" is clearly denied by Lawrance Thompson. In the concluding chapter of Melville's Quarrel With God (1952) Thompson writes:

> Absorbing and intricate as Melville's literary art proves to be, and praiseworthy as that intricacy certainly is, the disturbing fact remains that a comparison between the artistically expressed range of his vision and that of other celebrated literary figures (James, for example) reveals that Melville's range was limited by his inability to achieve some mature and working reconciliation of his confused inner conflicts; that Melville's art dramatizes, more vividly than anything else, a kind of arrested development. Spellbound by his own disillusionments, he became stranded in the narcissistic shallows and miseries of those disillusionments. The turn his life happened to take was an unfortunately inverted turn. Suffering from barked shins, during his youth, he quite naturally reacted with somewhat childish and spoiled-child wilfulness: But most of us are

> inclined to be a bit surprised to watch Melville spend his life kicking to pieces the furniture over which he had stumbled during his youth.[23]

Thompson, in fact, identifies as "Melville's artistic limitation . . . the apparent necessity of his projecting his own personal Hamletism into symbolic actions, before he had achieved a sufficiently mature perspective to give him and us a sense of adequate detachment."[24] The failing of Melville's fiction is, thus, according to Thompson, Melville's lack of detachment.

A view of Melville's fiction more sympathetic than that expressed by Thompson in Melville's Quarrel With God and yet very similar in its conclusions is expressed by Alan Lebowitz in Progress into Silence (1970). In his preface Lebowitz remarks:

> Because Melville was a repetitive, even obsessed, writer whose every work reveals deep private involvements, the nine novels . . . reflect a continuing personal development, one that culminates, finally, in a denial of his art, a lengthy, willful silence. My concern . . . is with the novelist's progress, as seen through the recurrent patterns in his fiction, and also with certain elements of the psychic biography implicit in that progress. The latter aim sounds perhaps more ominous--and pretentious--than it should. Nonetheless, overtly or dimly, all Melville's fiction mirrors his own turmoiled efforts to comprehend himself and structure his world in the creative act of writing. And while it may be said that every serious writer does something of the same, for Melville the personal investment is more direct, more self-conscious, and more passionate.[25]

What Thompson sees as narcissism and arrested development, Lebowitz views as obsession and repetition. Like Thompson, Lebowitz faults Melville for the obsessive nature of his "deep private involvements," for his lack of detachment and, for the resultant lack of control.

More recent scholarship, however, tends to support Berthoff, suggesting not only that Melville wrote "without personal presumption" but that he employed stylistic indirection in order to prevent his readers from identifying themselves with the first-person narrators of his fiction. This scholarship necessarily suggests the difficulties involved in attempting an "objective" evaluation of Melville's fiction. In Melville: The Ironic Diagram (1970) John D. Seelye points to the nature of the problem Melville's readers face when he observes that "there is no absolute centre of value in Melville's work to which one may refer, no moral standpoint against which to measure the declarations of his characters."[26]

> By now, a generation of critics has attempted to discern patterns of consistency in Melville's works, has tried to show that the many indirections meet at a common point. Yet, perhaps because each attempt has been predictably shaped by the personality or politics of the individual 'reader,' the cloud remains essentially undispelled--though undoubtedly made more colorful by the subjective images projected upon it. Like the whale who bears the name, Moby-Dick remains a mystery, an oracle without a sybil.[27]

Seelye argues that Melville "regarded his art as a system of tensions produced by diagrammatic contrasts, a symposium of opposed viewpoints." In this, he suggests, Melville may have been influenced by "the forms and attitudes of romantic irony." The equivocation in Melville's fiction he views not as a reflection of some obsession on Melville's part or as a consequence of the author's "narcissism" or "arrested development," but as an effect towards which Melville's art consciously aims as a "Euclidian expression" of the relativity of truth. "Truth, for Melville," he argues, "is a question, not an answer."[28]

Nor is Seelye alone in his view that the equivocation in Melville's fiction is self-consciously wrought by the author as an assertion of the relativity of truth. Discussing Melville's use of irony in Moby-Dick Paul Brodtkorb Jr. observes that "one is often uncertain whether an Ishmaelean judgment means what it says, or (as Professor Thompson usually argues) implies its opposite, or implies both meanings somehow to be true, or implies simply the condition of ironical possibility."

> The consequence is that by so frequently seeming to offer us no firm standpoint, Ishmael forces the reader back upon his own resources and prevents any direct relationship: the reader cannot appropriate the Ishmaelean ironist's positive attitude in order to be a follower of or dissenter from it because the ironist offers him none to appropriate. The reader is then forced to be and to project what is in himself; and one result (though it has other causes as well) is the mountain of conflicting testimony that makes up the Melville bibliography, itself suggestive of some of the more solipsistic implications of Ishmael's Narcissus figure (the key to it all) of Moby-Dick's first chapter.[29]

Brodtkorb asserts that Melville consciously forces his readers to project what is in themselves on to the page. "It becomes," he asserts, "literally of fundamental importance to take subjectivity into account in reading Melville."[30]

As Brodtkorb's comments suggest, objectivity has become a major problem in Melville studies for, at the same time that scholars have become increasingly concerned with the necessity of escaping from what they regard as the undue subjectivity of previous commentary, they have begun to recognize not only that the primary concern of Melville's fiction is the problem of self-discovery and realization or that a relationship exists between that concern and Melville's own inward growth but that, by denying his readers a firm standpoint from which to measure the declarations of his characters, Melville forces them to project what is in themselves on to the page. As a result, scholars have become even more acutely conscious of the need to overcome subjectivity and achieve some measure of objectivity. Nor, as Brodtkorb himself acknowledges, is it adequate simply to take subjectivity into account in reading Melville's fiction, for subjectivity is neither a peripheral nor an accidental issue in Melville scholarship but the central concern of Melville's fiction itself. What is required is a recognition that Melville himself was very much concerned with objectivity as a problem, as something to be achieved, and that, in his fiction, he is acutely conscious not only of self as subject, a consciousness that links the act of writing with self-discovery and realization, but conscious of self as style as well and, thus, as the means of linking subject and object. Melville is, moreover, acutely conscious of self as an object in the eyes of the reader which may mean either union with or opposition to that reader.[31] What is required, in short, is a greater understanding of the nature of Melville's literary self-consciousness. My purpose in the remainder of this chapter is to outline a context in which, I argue, Melville's literary self-consciousness can be more adequately understood.

II Subjectivity as an "Inescapable Condition"

The conscious concern with objectivity as a problem in Melville scholarship, as something to be achieved, appears to have developed largely in reaction to the biographical readings of Melville's fiction which were so prevalent in the early days of the Melville revival. And yet, this anti-biographical or anti-personalist tendency in Melville scholarship is itself part of a widespread reaction against what the modern sensibility considers "the exploitation of personality" in Romantic and post-Romantic art.[32] Thus, as Harold Bloom observes, "subjectivity or self-consciousness" has become "the salient problem of Romanticism, at least for modern readers, who tend to station themselves in regard to the Romantics depending upon how relevant or adequate they judge the dialectic of consciousness and imagination to be."[33] In an attempt to escape from personality, modern scholarship has, for the most part, stressed the need for objectivity.

Indeed, as Robert Langbaum points out in The Poetry of Experience, a "militant insistence upon objectivity characterizes the leading critical doctrines" of the twentieth century. And yet, he argues, "the desire to overcome subjectivity and achieve objectivity is by no means peculiar to the twentieth century, but has determined the direction of poetic development since the end of the Enlightenment."[34]

> The whole conscious concern with objectivity as a problem, as something to be achieved, is in fact specifically romantic. Objectivity presented no problem to an age of faith like the Middle Ages, which considered the object and its value as equally given. Nor did it present a problem to a critical and rationalist age like the Enlightenment, the whole point of which was to undermine the established order of values by driving a wedge between the object and its value. It was the romanticists with their new reconstructive purpose who, starting with an inherited split between object and value and wanting to heal the breach, saw objectivity as desirable and as difficult to achieve. When subjectivity came to be called a disease (*la maladie du siècle*), the Romantic period had begun.[35]

What Langbaum suggests is that to fault the Romantics for their subjectivity is to misunderstand the direction of Romantic thought. For the Romantics, he argues, subjectivity was not a "program" but an "inescapable condition." "No sooner had the eighteenth century left the individual isolated within himself--without an objective counterpart for the values he sensed in his own will and feelings--than romanticism began as a movement toward objectivity, toward a new principle of connection with society and nature through the imposition of values on the external world."[36] Without a "new principle of connection with society and nature," man would be, as Emerson so aptly phrased it, isolated within, "the splendid labyrinth of his own perceptions," there to wander without end.[37]

As Merlin Bowen suggests, if we are to understand Melville's fiction, we must meet Melville on the ground of his principal concern and survey his works from there. It is necessary, however, to be more precise than Merlin Bowen is when he identifies "the problem of self-discovery and realization" as Melville's principal concern. In this thesis I argue that Melville's principal concern is not simply self-discovery and realization but, more specifically, the possibility of overcoming subjectivity and achieving objectivity through self-discovery and realization, of escaping from personality through the discovery within the self of the means of self-transcendence. For Melville, as for the Romantic writers generally, self-discovery and realization was not an end in itself, but a way out of the morass of inwardness, a means of self-transcendence. What Geoffrey Hartman states concerning the art of the Romantics is, in effect, true of Melville's fiction as well.

> Neither a mere increase in sensibility nor a mere widening of self-knowledge constitutes its purpose. The Romantic poets do not exalt consciousness *per se*. They have recognized it as a kind of death-in-life, as the product of a division in the self. . . . Constructing what Yeats calls an anti-self, or recovering a deeply buried experience, the poet seeks a return to 'Unity of Being.' Consciousness is only a middle term, the strait through which everything must pass and the artist plots to have everything pass through whole, without sacrifice to abstraction.[38]

Like his contemporaries, Melville regarded subjectivity as a major problem, one with immediate implications for literature itself. Unless the modern artist could find a basis for objectivity within the self, he would, Melville recognized, be isolated within "the splendid labyrinth of his own perceptions," there to confront what one scholar terms "the nothingness of consciousness when consciousness becomes the grounds of everything."[39] Thus, as Geoffrey Hartman notes of English Romantic poetry, "Subjectivity--even solipsism--becomes the subject of poems which qua poetry seek to transmute it."[40]

Melville's literary self-consciousness arises out of his recognition of the subjective origins of his fiction. As recent scholarship suggests, what characterizes Melville's fiction is not simply the direct and passionate nature of Melville's deep private involvement, but, above all, the degree to which he is acutely self-conscious of the nature and extent of that involvement. "It is impossible to talk or write," observes the narrator of Pierre, "without apparently throwing oneself helplessly open; the Invulnerable Knight wears his visor down."[41] Melville's persistent attempts to overcome subjectivity and achieve objectivity, I argue, helped to determine the subject-matter, the form and the style of Melville's fiction from Mardi to Pierre. If, as several scholars point out, that fiction seems to invite a biographical interpretation, it is , in part, because Melville himself was acutely aware of the subjective origins of his fiction. And yet, in that fiction, he attempted to transcend the purely subjective.

This thesis does not attempt to expound Melville the man or to provide simply another reading of any one of Melville's works. It offers, rather, a new context for reading Melville's fiction, a context within which Melville's self-conscious concern with subjectivity can be more adequately understood. As a first step towards defining that context, the second chapter of this thesis examines the nature of the Romantic concern with subjectivity and its consequences for Romantic literature. Chapter Three examines Melville's self-conscious concern with subjectivity as that concern manifests itself in his non-fictional writings. Melville's concern with subjectivity is clearly evident in his correspondence, in his marginalia and in his well-known review of Hawthorne's Mosses From An Old Manse. Central to Melville's concern with subjectivity is his conception of art and of the artist's relation to his artwork and to his reading public. In Chapter Four Moby-Dick is discussed in relation to the Romantic conception of the "growth of the mind" and to the distinctively Romantic form of the autobiography to which that conception gave rise. Chapter Five examines Pierre as a reworking of Moby-Dick and as Melville's final statement of despair concerning the possibility of making what, in "Hawthorne and His Mosses," he terms "the mystical ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty which," he asserts, "ubiquitously possesses men of genius," perceptible to mortal senses.[42] Pierre, it is argued, leads directly to The Confidence-Man and to Melville's decision to abandon his career as a publishing artist.

III Melville and the Romantic Conception of the "Growth of the Mind"

In its concern with the nature of Melville's literary self-consciousness this thesis is, in part, an attempt to incorporate into the study of Melville some of the significant advances made in recent years in the study of English Romanticism. While the influence of English Romantic thought and literature on the writers of the "American Renaissance" is generally recognized, recent studies of the English Romantic poets indirectly suggest that the American writers share with their English counterparts a formative concern, that of finding a significant relation between the subjective and objective worlds. As Earl Wasserman points out, "we may conceive of poetry as made up superficially _of_ features, such as nature images, or lyricism; but is is made _by_ purposes and epistemology is poetically constitutive."[43] Melville, I argue, shares this epistemological concern with the English Romantic poets and with Romantic writers generally.

One of the most important discussions of Melville's fiction in relation to Romantic thought and literature occurs in Warner Berthoff's _The Example of Melville_. Although this work is not in itself a study of Melville's relation to the Romantic movement, Berthoff indirectly suggests the importance of Romantic thought to an understanding of Melville's fiction. Berthoff, indeed, argues not only that Melville had what he terms "an intense and yet objective experience" of the "growth of the mind," a conception he describes as "perhaps the major original theme of Romantic thought and literature," but that Melville took that theme as the subject of his fiction. "By the accidents and timing of his own inward growth," Berthoff asserts, "Melville found himself ready to take this great theme in charge."

> He found himself able, that is, to lodge his crowding private intuitions in a scheme of apprehension which was authoritatively established in his era's literature and yet far from being played out. As a result he could capitalize immediately and extravagantly upon certain major conventions for dealing with it --those conventions of understanding and expression that his pell-mell assimilation of Goethe, Emerson, Hawthorne, Coleridge, and Carlyle, among the masters of this theme in his century, had disclosed to him--without losing his own identity in the process.[44]

What Berthoff's comments suggest is that Melville's fiction needs to be understood within the context of those elements of Romantic thought and literature that the conception of the growth of the mind organizes. In observing that Melville "found himself ready to take this great theme in charge," Berthoff, in effect, acknowledges that Melville shares with other Romantic writers the major theme of early nineteenth-century literature. What is more, he necessarily suggests that Melville, to some extent, also shares the Romantic ideas that gave rise to the conception of the growth of the mind and the aesthetic premises on which that conception is based.

This thesis specifically examines the extent to which the Romantic conception of the growth of the mind informs both Melville's thought and his fiction and thus, the extent to which it is relevant to an understanding of the subjectivity of that fiction. As several scholars have pointed out, it can be questioned whether Melville's books are really novels at all. In this thesis I argue that, as novels, they can be most meaningfully understood within the context of the

Romantic concern with the growth of the mind.

The Romantics' concern with the growth of the mind arises out of their attempt to escape from personality, to transcend the self by descending into it. "The poet's basic faith," Lawrence Buell observes, "is that if only he looks far enough inward, or merges himself with the world soul through nature, he will reach the unconscious or universal."[45] Out of the concern with the growth of the mind developed a distinctively Romantic literary form, a form Harold Bloom terms "the internalized quest-romance" because, he argues, the Romantic poet "takes the patterns of quest-romance and transposes them into his own imaginative life."[46] Perhaps more accurate, however, is M.H. Abrams' description of the literary form that developed as "creative autobiography"--

> the more-or-less fictional work of art about the development of the artist himself, which is preoccupied with memory, time, and the relation of what is passing to what is eternal; is punctuated by illuminated moments or 'epiphanies;' turns on a crisis which involves the question of the meaning of the author's life and the purpose of his sufferings; is resolved by the author's discovery of his literary identity and vocation and the attendant need to give up wordly involvement for artistic detachment; and includes its own poetic, and sometimes the circumstances ot its own genesis.[47]

The Romantic quest within is concerned not simply with self-discovery and realization but with the discovery of the nature of reality itself and, thus, with the discovery of its own poetic as well, what Melville terms "the great Art of Telling the Truth" (HHM, 542).

In Mardi: A Romance of Polynesian Adventure, I argue, Melville, in effect, internalizes the form of the travel narrative he had developed with such success in Typee and Omoo. In writing Mardi, Melville turns from the depiction of external reality, the objective world of facts, in favor of his own "world of mind."[48] Mardi is, as Feidelson points out, really "a study of what it entails to regard thinking as a metaphysical journey."[49] What is so fascinating about Mardi is the fact that within that work Melville moves from the literary form of the travel narrative and the conception of reality it assumes to a literary form approaching what Abrams terms "creative autobiography" and to an assertion of the infinitude within man himself. Mardi is, in part, a fictional enactment of Melville's own movement within and of his subsequent inward growth and reflects his own growing concern as to the nature of reality and the place of the infinite in what Abrams terms "the pervading two-term system of subject and object, ego and non-ego, the human mind or consciousness and its transactions with nature."[50]

In Mardi the depiction of surface appearances is abandoned in an attempt to explore the world within. "Oh, reader, list!" exclaims the narrator of that novel,

> I've chartless voyaged. With compass and the lead, we had not found these Mardian Isles. Those who boldly launch, cast off all cables; and turning from the common breeze, that's fair for all, with their own breath, fill their own sails. Hug the shore, naught new is seen; and 'Land ho!' at last was sung, when a new world was sought.
>
> That voyager steers his bark through seas, untracked before; ploughed his own path mid jeers; though with a heart that oft was heavy with the thought, that he might only be too bold, and grope where land was none.

> So I,
> And though essaying but a sportive sail, I was driven from my course by a blast resistless; and ill-provided, young, and bowed to the brunt of things before my prime, still fly before the gale;--hard have I striven to keep stout heart.
> And if it harder be, than e'er before, to find new climes, when now our seas have oft been circled by ten thousand prows,--much more the glory!
> But this new world here sought, is stranger far than his, who stretched his vans from Palos. It is the world of mind; wherein the wanderer may gaze round, with more of wonder than Balboa's band roving through the golden Aztec glades. (M, 556-57)

Thus is initiated a quest for self-knowledge, a quest which is simultaneously for the ground of all knowledge and for the literary form in which to embody that knowledge. What Geoffrey Hartman states concerning that quest in English Romantic poetry is at least equally applicable to Melville's own fiction. It does not, Hartman states, "lead to what is generally called a _truth_: some final station of the mind. It remains as problematic a crossing as that from death to second life or from exile to redemption."[51] It results in both "the sense of unspeakable security" Melville experiences upon completing _Moby-Dick_ and in the equally unspeakable despair underlying his later remark to Hawthorne that he had "pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated."[52]

The Romantic attempt to find a way out of the morass of inwardness is, at the same time, also an attempt to find a basis of communication with the reader. One consequence of the internalization within the individual of the grounds of all reality is that meaning itself necessarily becomes a personal creation. Thus, what Nathaniel Hawthorne observes regarding his Twice-Told Tales is, in some sense, true of all Romantic art: they are, Hawthorne remarks of his tales, "attempts and very imperfectly successful ones, to open an intercourse with the world."[53] In making that attempt the Romantic writers are acutely conscious not only of the self as subject, but conscious of self as style as well and thus as the means of uniting subject and object. In attempting "to open an intercourse with the world," they are, however, beset by an unremitting consciousness of self as an object in the eyes of the reader.[54]

The Romantic writer's attempt to find a way out of the labyrinth of self is thus, in part, an attempt to stand in some kind of meaningful relation to his readers, a relationship that in itself transcends the dichotomy of subject and object. "Thoughts are frozen and utterances benumbed," Hawthorne asserts in "The Custom House" introduction to The Scarlet Letter, "unless the speaker stand in some true relation with his audience."[55] For the Romantic writers a "true relationship" is one that transcends the impersonal, subject-object, I-it form of encounter. Thus Wordsworth writes The Prelude as an extended address to a personal friend while in Leaves of Grass Walt Whitman repeatedly reminds his readers, "Camerado, this in no book/ Who touches this touches a man."[56]

The concept of the symbol developed in both England and America out of the Romantics' attempt to discover a significant relationship between the subjective and objective worlds, an attempt, in effect, to redefine the nature of man's understanding of himself and of his relation to the external world and thus, necessarily, the artist's conception of himself and of his relation to his artwork and to his readers. Although, as Albert Gerard notes, none of the English Romantic poets were "as much concerned with the theory of the symbol as Coleridge was, their poetic practice tends in the same direction: toward a symbolic, rather than mystical, apprecep-tion [sic] of the world."[57] This symbolic apperception of the world is equally characteristic of the literature of the American Renaissance. Indeed, as Feidelson notes, symbolism is for these writers, even more than for their English counterparts, at once both technique and theme. "It is a governing principle: not a stylistic device, but a point of view; not a casual subject, but a pervasive presence in the intellectual landscape."[58]

As it developed in Romantic thought and literature, the concept of the symbol involved a redefinition of the nature of art and of the artist's relation to his artwork and to his readers. In Romantic thought the symbol is conceived as reconciling within itself the division of subject and object, unconscious and conscious, infinite and finite and, as such, is advanced as a revelation of Ultimate Reality. Thus, Goethe, for example, argues that "true symbolism is where the particular represents the more general, not as a dream or a shadow, but as a living, momentary revelation of the Inscrutable."[59] Conceived as a revelation of Ultimate Reality, the symbol provides the Romantic artist with an objective basis for overcoming subjectivity and with a means of communication transcending the dichotomy of subject and object. The symbol is, in fact, thought to communicate its meaning as an experience rather than as an idea, an experience in which subject and object are fused in what Goethe terms a "living momentary revelation."

Given the symbolic nature of the Romantic vision, the Romantic conception of art is necessarily maieutic. It attempts to communicate not outer form but inner reality, not the letter but the spirit inherent in the letter: it appeals not to the reason but to the unity of being which the Romantics conceive as underlying the division of subject and object, reader and work of art, artist and reading public. As Geoffrey Hartman notes, in Romantic literature the motif of the quest becomes not only a figure for self-discovery and realization but "a sustained metaphor for the experience of the artist during creation," as he attempts, through the work of art, to overcome the dichotomy of subject and object and thereby open "an intercourse with the world."[60] What is represented in Romantic poetry is, Cyrus Hamlin observes, "in the ideal instance, the mental process which created it." The poem itself, he points out, "is a reflective demonstration of the act through which it comes to be; and the subject of poetry is the mind which produces it and speaks through it."[61] That act, however, like the quest itself, is one that must be relived in the mind of each individual reader. Art is, Herbert Read notes, conceived in Romantic thought as "having an evolutionary function in relation to human consciousness."[62] Romantic literature attempts to deliver its readers into an awareness of the need for and the higher reality of the internalized quest for self-knowledge.

Romantic irony arises out of the tension between the temporal structure of the work of art itself and the transcendent experience that work of art is intended to convey. The tension between the two is, as Cyrus Hamlin points out, "the basic dilemma of Romantic poetry:"

> the temporal structure of the poem is intended to transcend itself and reveal the infinite; but the language of the poem, the situation it represents, and the voice of the self which speaks through it, all are necessarily finite and limited, subject to the processes of time, human experience and human history. According to the ideal of art . . . the beautiful and the sublime should become identical through a symbolic fusion, whereby the temporal and infinite are united within the totality of the poem. Such a concept of symbolic form constitutes the central Romantic theory of poetry, at least in the ideal. In practice, however, the poets themselves, who always provide a more reliable measure than the theorists for what poetry actually does and can do, ultimately recognize that such a symbolic fusion cannot be achieved. Some degree of tension or discontinuity always remains between the finite means and the transcendent goal, which poetic language and poetic experience cannot overcome.[63]

Underlying Romantic literature is a deep feeling of the ultimate inadequacy of words to effectively convey the totality of experience. Even when most effectively used, words remain, to some extent, a compromise.[64] Romantic irony is the means of divorcing the spirit from the letter, the transcendent from the temporal, what in "Hawthorne and His Mosses" Melville terms "the mystical, ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty" from "the symbol by which [the artist] makes it perceptible to mortal senses" (HHM, 536).

In his fiction Melville attempts to overcome subjectivity and achieve objectivity and, by so doing, to establish a basis of communication with his readers transcending the dichotomy of subject and object. If, as recent scholarship suggests, Melville's fiction is very much audience-oriented, that orientation and the self-conscious artistry underlying it must be understood within the context of Melville's attempt to provoke his readers into self-discovery and realization. Moby-Dick is really Melville's final attempt:

> It is as if Melville, through the medium of Ishmael, were giving his audience one last chance to create itself, to discover its role in reading the book. It is understandable that at times Ishmael's voice has an edge on it. After Moby-Dick, there is no figure comparable to Ishmael in Melville's works to encourage and cajole the reader directly and to set the example by responding to the world and to the problem of artistic creation as he would have the reader respond to the act of reading--as forms of self-definition. Moby-Dick's metaphysics and its meditations on the phantoms that turn out to 'be' oneself are inseparable from its rhetorical goal of helping an audience to create itself.[65]

Melville's irony arises out of the tension between the temporal structure of his art and its transcendent goal and out of his unwillingness to allow himself or his readers to rest in the temporal. Irony is, for Melville, less a rhetorical device with a "specific communicative end" than a mode of consciousness, one "with no end that is not already embraced by its own nature."[66] That mode of consciousness Ishmael celebrates in "The Lee Shore" chapter of Moby-Dick: "in landlessness alone resides the highest truth, shoreless, indefinite as God." "All deep, earnest thinking," he declares, "is but the intrepid effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her sea" (MD, 97).

In his early fiction Melville exhibits great faith in the quest and in the possibility of making what, in his review of Hawthorne's Mosses, he terms the "mystical, ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty" perceptible to his readers. Experience, however, forces him to revise his views and his fiction. Melville's failure to involve the reading public in his quest results in his decision to abandon his career as a publishing author. Melville was highly disturbed by the reception his writings were given by the reading public. What he valued least was highly praised while that of which he thought the most went virtually unnoticed. Although he had come in good faith to speak the "inside narrative" he found that the incredulity of his readers forced him to become a "canting showman" in spite of himself. Herman Melville's relationship with his reading public ends in The Confidence-Man and in a masquerade in which he would prefer not to take a part.

IV Melville and the "Theme of the Artist's Problems"

"Once we grant that the return to objectivity is a purpose distinctive of the literature since the Enlightenment," Robert Langbaum argues,

> then the poetry of the last one hundred and seventy-five years or so can be understood as belonging to a single developing tradition in which the romantic idea, far from having been rejected, is being perpetually realized through isolation from the incidental accretions--from eighteenth century accretions in the nineteenth century, and from nineteenth century accretions in the twentieth.[67]

To examine Melville's fiction in the context of the attempt to overcome subjectivity and achieve objectivity is to locate his "modernity" in his self-conscious concern with subjectivity. To do so, however, is not to argue that the "literary personality" of Melville's fiction presents himself primarily as a self-conscious artist, nor is it necessarily to assert that Melville's fiction is, for the most part, concerned with what Willard Thorp terms "the theme of the artist's problems." Melville does not "from first to last" present himself as a self-conscious artist, as Charles Feidelson Jr. argues he does, nor, as Feidelson himself acknowledges, has he largely been responded to as an artist. Melville presents himself, rather, as an Emersonian "representative man,"[68] though a man of experience, one who has been "before the mast." He is concerned not with artistic problems per se but with the problems of man.

To argue that Melville's principal concern is "the theme of the artist's problems" is to ignore what Willard Thorp himself recognized as the over-riding issue--the relation of these artistic problems to what Thorp himself termed "the vital center" of Melville's spiritual life. As Lawrance

Thompson notes, "Melville's spiritual idiom . . . controlled and determined his artistic idiom."[69] Melville's enduring concern is not with artistic problems per se but with what he terms the "great Art of Telling the Truth," a concern which has an artistic component but a concern which, nonetheless, ultimately transcends the bounds of art itself. As Edgar Dryden argues, all of Melville's first-person narrators are artists, but the artist in them is secondary to that which they experience and the Truth they reveal.[70]

In his own personal correspondence Melville speaks not primarily as an artist preoccupied with artistic problems but as a representative man of experience. Thus, for example, he remarks to Richard Henry Dana Jr. concerning White-Jacket:

> This man-of-war book, My Dear Sir, is in some parts rather man-of-warish in style--rather aggressive I fear.--But you, who like myself, have experienced in person the usages to which a sailor is subjected, will not wonder, perhaps, at any thing in this book. Would to God, that every man who shall read it, had been before the mast in an armed ship, that he might know something himself of what he shall only read of.
> (L, 93)

Similarily, in response to Ralph Waldo Emerson's self-assured statement in the essay "Prudence" that "The drover, the sailor buffets it [the storm] all day, and his health renews itself as vigorous a pulse under the sleet, as under the sun of June," Melville remarks quite simply: "To one who has weathered Cape Horn as a common sailor what stuff all this is."[71] Melville's South Sea adventures may not have provided him with what Warner Berthoff terms "his decisive inspiration as a writer;"

nevertheless, one consequence of those adventures was that he thereafter almost invariably spoke as a "common sailor," one who had "weathered Cape Horn."

It is this "common sailor" stance, moreover, which characterizes the first-person narrators of Melville's fiction. Melville's earliest works, Typee and Omoo, of course center upon the relation of personal experiences. The narrators of these works speak not as literary "artists in the riggings" but as common sailors turned narrators. This stance, moreover, characterizes the first-person narrators of Melville's later novels as well. Thus, in Moby-Dick, Ishmael states prophetically:

> And, as for me, if, by any possibility, there be any as yet undiscovered prime thing in me; if I shall ever deserve any real repute in that small but high hushed world which I might not be unreasonably ambitious of; if hereafter I shall do anything that, upon the whole, a man might rather have done than to have left undone; if at my death, my executors, or more properly my creditors, find any precious MSS. in my desk, then here I prospectively ascribe all the honor and the glory to whaling; for a whale-ship was my Yale College and my Harvard. (MD, 101)

If all Melville's first-person narrators are artists, they speak as artists schooled in experiences of the watery parts of the world and not as landsmen cast upon the "slavish shore."

However exceptional may have been the fact that Melville himself sailed before the mast, the primacy he places on experience over analytic reflection and, on life over art, is not in itself unique. Indeed, Robert Langbaum argues that the essential idea connecting the poetry of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and thus, Romanticism with the "so-called reactions against it," is what he terms "the doctrine of experience:"

> the doctrine that the imaginative apprehension gained through immediate experience is primary and certain whereas the analytic reflection that follows is secondary and problematical. The poetry of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can . . . be seen in connection as a poetry of experience--a poetry constructed upon the deliberate disequilibrium between experience and idea, a poetry which makes its statement not as an idea but as an experience from which one or more ideas can be abstracted as problematical rationalizations.[72]

In a manner characteristic of the Romantic writers generally, Melville is concerned less with art itself than with the experience underlying it and with its intended effect on the reader.[73] Melville's fiction is unremitting in its assertion of the disequilibrium between experience and idea and between life and art. To celebrate Melville as a self-conscious artist occupied throughout his career with artistic problems can be misleading if that celebration elevates those problematical rationalizations above the experiences with which Melville's fiction is primarily concerned.

Although with the publication of The Confidence-Man, Melville abandoned his publishing career, he did not, at the same time, abandon his quest for certitude nor did he entirely relinquish his attempts to embody that quest in a literary form. Undoubtedly one of the most frequently quoted statements concerning Melville is Hawthorne's journal entry for Thursday, November 20th, 1856, an entry in which Hawthorne recounts his brief meeting with Melville in Liverpool immediately prior to the latter's departure for the Holy Land.

> Melville, as he always does, began to reason of Providence and futurity, and of everything that lies beyond human ken, and informed me that he had 'pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated;' but still he does not seem to rest in that anticipation; and I think will never rest until he gets hold of a definite belief. It is strange how he persists--and has persisted ever since I knew him, and probably long before--in wandering to and fro over these deserts, as dismal and monotonous as the sand hills amid which we were sitting. He can neither believe, nor be comfortable in his unbelief; and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other. If he were a religious man, he would be one of the most truly religious and reverential; he has a very high and noble nature and is better worth immortality than most of us.[74]

What Hawthorne celebrates is not Melville's intellectualizing, not his attempts to "reason of Providence and futurity, and of everything that," Hawthorne insists, "lies beyond human ken," but the persistence with which Melville pursues the quest and the honesty and courage that distinguish his efforts.

According to Alan Lebowitz, Hawthorne's comments "may well serve as a lasting image of the man."[75] Certainly, Hawthorne's portrait of Melville is the image of the man celebrated in scholarship since the early days of the Melville revival. The response to Melville's fiction has indeed been a response to a personality. But, as F.R. Leavis notes, "the problems of a poet that are worth any intensity of study are the problems of a man--one open to being profoundly disturbed by experience, and capable of a troubled soul."[76] The response to Melville's fiction has been the response of those who have perceived the works as the expression of just such a man. Although that response does not in itself demonstrate the particularly literary merit of Melville's fiction, it is a response with which Melville scholars must come to terms in their attempts to go beyond it in order to determine the specifically literary quality of the fiction itself.

CHAPTER TWO

THE PROBLEM OF OBJECTIVITY IN THE CONTEXT OF ROMANTIC THOUGHT AND LITERATURE

> And still deeper the meaning of that story of Narcissus, who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned. But that same image we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all. (MD, 14)

Although the deeper meaning that Ishmael discovers in the Narcissus myth may not be "the key to it all;" although it may only reflect the "damp, drizzly November" in Ishmael's own soul and the dead reckoning that prompts him to take to the sea as a substitute for "pistol and ball;" nonetheless, it does provide an interesting commentary on the nature of the Romantic vision. For, in the eyes of the Romantic artist, the image born upon the trembling shimmer of the fountain's surface takes on a new significance. "It becomes," argues Louise Vinge in The Narcissus Theme in Western European Literature Up to the Early Nineteenth Century, "a symbol of the ability of the creative genius to come to know the deepest spiritual forces within himself. One no longer sees aberration, arrogance and fatal isolation in the observation of the reflection, but rather an approach to truth and a genuine love of God and man."[1] Indeed the mythical figure is used by the Romantics "to illustrate a new relationship to one's own self and to artistic creation," and, in some instances, actually becomes a figure for the artist. "Dichter," asserts A.W. Schlegel, "sind doch immer Narcisse."[2]

Such a radical revision of the Narcissus myth might prompt one to assert what E.R. Dodd does concerning the proliferation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of theories concerning Orphic cults. Speaking of what he terms "the edifice reared by an ingenious scholarship," Dodd states: "I am tempted to call it the unconscious projection upon the screen of antiquity of certain unsatisfied religious longings characteristic of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."[3] Unlike the interpretations to which Dodd refers, Melville's use of the Narcissus myth is not an exercise in historical scholarship. And yet, his revision of it is characteristic of the nineteenth-century interest in myth generally and of the radically different understanding of the nature of mythology underlying those reinterpretations. But what characterizes the nineteenth-century interest in mythology is not unconscious projection but a self-conscious effort to reinterpret myth in the light of contemporary thought. Although the Romantics use the Narcissus myth as a "screen" or "medium," they do so not simply to project their own unsatisfied religious longings, but rather to focus their own concern with the inescapability of such projections, be they conscious or otherwise. What is important, in this instance at least, is not the relative subjectivity of the Romantic revision but the changes in attitude that result in the choice of the Narcissus myth as a screen or medium at all. The choice of the Narcissus myth suggests, as Walter Strauss points out with regard to the Orpheus myth, that there are certain particularities in the myth which make it eminently attractive to the Romantic imagination.[4]

I Narcissus as a Figure for the Romantic Artist

As Louise Vinge points out, the Romantic understanding of the Narcissus myth represents the culmination of a gradual tendency to isolate the reflection episode from the framework of the myth itself, an isolation which frees the figure of Narcissus from the traditionally negative moral interpretations. As a result, the mythical figure is no longer considered an embodiment of blind self-love: he becomes, rather, a symbol of conscious self-observation and of the concern with the divine in man himself. The reflection episode itself becomes an image of the self divided into observer and observed. What the Romantic Narcissus sees reflected upon the face of the water is thus not external reality but his own inner, spiritual essence. The beauty which so fixes and fascinates him is, consequently, not superficial. His eye is intent upon "the ungraspable phantom of life," "the mystical, ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty" which, in the review of Hawthorne's Mosses, Melville says "ubiquitously possesses men of genius" (HHM, 536). Freed from the traditionally negative moral interpretations, Narcissus then becomes a symbol both of the positive meaning of self-observation and of the high virtue involved in attaining an awareness of the powers of one's own self.[5]

In his revision of the Narcissus-myth, Melville does not present Narcissus as a figure for the artist, but he does use the reflection episode as an image of the self divided into observer and observed. Indeed, Melville uses the reflection episode to suggest both the nature of man's relation to the external world and to himself. Ishmael indirectly raises both questions in discussing the nature of man's attraction to water, an attraction he attempts to explain with reference to Narcissus' love for the image he sees reflected on the fountain's surface. Ishmael, in effect, regards mankind's attraction to water as a function of man's attempt to understand himself. Thus if, as Ishmael asserts, "meditation and water are wedded forever," it is in part because the water's surface provides a natural looking-glass through which man can measure the depth of his own spiritual nature.

According to Robert Zoellner, "the Narcissus myth expresses the fact that man can, on the intuitional level, glimpse himself in nature. . . ."

> It implies that the external quest is an internal quest, that outer knowledge is inner knowledge, and that both can be very dangerous. As Narcissus plunged into the fountain, so does Ishmael go to sea. As Narcissus drowned, so does Ishmael--almost. The ungraspable phantom is as much within man as without man, and for Ishmael the voyage of the Pequod is as much a voyage into the interiorities of his own soul as it is a voyage into the exteriorities of the ocean world.[6]

But if, as Melville's version of the myth also suggests, the knower is a conditioning factor of all that can be known, then the fountain's surface becomes, as Ahab says of the gold doubloon nailed to the Pequod's mainmast--a doubloon Pip refers to as the ship's navel--in itself "the image of the rounder globe, which, like a magician's glass, to each and every man in turn but mirrors back his own mysterious self" (MD, 359); then the unembodied image Narcissus sees objectified on the fountain's surface becomes both the mark of a tormenting and an ungraspable phantom, and "the key to it all."

In Moby-Dick Melville uses the reflection episode to suggest the nature of man's relation to the external world and thus, by extension, the nature of the human condition. The effect of Melville's version of the Narcissus myth is not to make Narcissus a figure for the artist, but to suggest that Narcissus' problem is one in which all men share. That problem presents itself in Romantic thought primarily as a question concerning the perils of self-consciousness. The nature of these perils is aptly described by Ralph Waldo Emerson in his essay "Experience:"

> It is very unhappy, but too late to be helped, the discovery we have made that we exist. That discovery is called the Fall of Man. Ever afterwards we suspect our instruments. We have learned that we do not see directly, but mediately, and that we have no means of correcting these colored and distorting lenses which we are, or of computing the amount of their errors. Perhaps these subject-lenses have a creative power; perhaps there are no objects. Once we lived in what we saw; now the rapaciousness of this new power, which threatens to absorb all things, engages us. Nature, art, persons, letters, religions, objects, successively tumble in, and God is but one of its ideas. Nature and literature

> are subjective phenomena; every evil and every good thing is a shadow we cast.[7]

Man can, Emerson notes, no longer live in what he sees and, consequently, he suspects his "subject-lenses" and the rapaciousness of the creative power he appears to possess. "Nature, arts, persons, letters, religions, objects, successively tumble in," and the meaning of life, like God, becomes "but one of its ideas . . . a shadow we cast." The mild, tormenting image Narcissus sees in the fountain becomes, in the eyes of the Romantic artist, a figure for that same image he himself sees throughout nature. Held a captive of his own reflection, Narcissus himself becomes understandably a figure for modern man. His attempt to grasp "the ungraspable phantom of life," a phantom which is physically ungraspable because it is as much within man as without, is thus, in the eyes of the Romantic, not an isolated act but a reoccurring event and the key to man's existence.

Although Melville presents Narcissus as a figure for mankind rather than for the artist alone, he nevertheless identifies a problem with profound implications for the Romantic artist. That problem is implicit in A.W. Schlegel's aphoristic comment, "Dichter sind doch immer Narcisse," for, whereas Narcissus' difficulty presents itself in Romantic thought generally as a question concerning the nature of man's relation to himself and to all that lies outside himself, that same problem presents itself to the Romantic artist specifically as a question concerning both the nature of the artist's relation to an art he creates out of himself and the possibility of his creating what T.S. Eliot terms an "objective correlative" as a means of communicating his necessarily subjective vision to his reading public.

In The Salt Sea Mastodon Robert Zoellner describes the figure of Narcissus as "definitive" because he regards Melville's version of the reflection episode as "the vehicle for the coalescence of the five constitutive metaphors" which, he argues, shape that novel and, consequently, as in itself a constitutive metaphor for the "normative epistemology" which, he asserts, "gives Moby-Dick its underlying unity, its conceptual cohesion, its tonal consistency."[8] But, as Schlegel's comment suggests, the reflection episode bodies forth not only the Romantic thought underlying Moby-Dick, ideas which, to a great extent, inform Melville's other works as well, but the nature of the relation between artist and artwork implicit in that thought. Indeed, Narcissus' problem suggests to the Romantic artist the essential elements of his own situation and, as it appears in Romantic thought and literature, frequently becomes a metaphor for the artist's relation to his artwork and, at the same time, a statement of the social function of self-expressive art. Underlying the Romantics' revision of the Narcissus myth is their concern with establishing the objective basis for a positive subjectivity, that is, for a concern with the self that transcends the blind self-love traditionally personified in the figure of Narcissus.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the nature of the Romantic concern with subjectivity and the context out of which that concern arises in order to establish both the premises on which it is based and the conception of art to which it gives rise. This chapter is primarily concerned with the Romantic conception of "the growth of the mind" and with the nature of the artist's relation to his artwork implicit in that conception. The assumption underlying this chapter is not only that Melville wrote his works in the context herein set out but that, to a large extent, he accepted the same premises and encountered the same problems as other English and American Romantic writers. The relation of Melville's fiction to the issues considered in this chapter is the subject of Chapters Three and Four.

II The Nature of Romantic Subjectivity

If one no longer sees aberration, arrogance and fatal isolation in the observation of the reflection, it is because of changed attitudes toward both the individual and self-knowledge. Central to this change in attitudes is the gradual tendency in both eighteenth century and early nineteenth-century thought to locate within the individual himself the ultimate grounds of all reality. In Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature M.H. Abrams attempts to set this tendency within the context of the Christian tradition. "In its central tradition," Abrams observes,

> Christian thought had posited three primary elements: God, nature and the soul; with God of

> course utterly prepotent, as the creator and controller of the two others and as the end, the telos, of the natural process and human endeavor. The tendency in innovative Romantic thought (manifested in proportion as the thinker is or is not a Christian theist) is greatly to diminish, and at the extreme to eliminate, the role of God, leaving as the primary agencies man and the world, mind and nature, the ego and the non-ego, the self and the not-self, spirit and the other, or (in the favorite antithesis of post-Kantian philosophers) subject and object.[9]

What is significant about Abrams' formulation of the Romantic concern with the relation of subject and object is that Abrams places that concern within the context of the attempt to "naturalize the supernatural and humanize the divine." By so doing, he is able to argue convincingly that Romantic thought and literature represent not just isolated, individual or national achievements but, what he terms "a decisive event in Western culture." "The writers of that age," he asserts, "in reinterpreting their cultural inheritance, developed new modes of organizing experience, new ways of seeing the outer world and a new set of relations of the individual to himself, to nature, to history, and to his fellow men."[10] This endeavor permeates the thought and literature of the English Romantic poets and of their European and American counterparts as well.

As Abrams points out, the introduction of the subject-object dualism "does not delete but simply assimilates the traditional powers and actions of God, as well as the overall pattern of Christian history."[11] Consequently, what the Romantic writers face is not simply an epistemological problem, not simply a question of how "subject and object meet in a meaningful relationship," but one concerning the nature of Ultimate Reality itself and thus one concerning the place of the infinite in what Abrams terms "the pervading two-term system of subject and object, ego and non-ego, the human mind or consciousness and its transactions with nature."[12] Not surprisingly, Richard P. Adams' attempt to consider what F.O. Matthiessen terms the "American Renaissance" as an epistemological problem ultimately results in his assertion that "the basic epistemological problem for all these writers . . . was that of knowing who they were, in relation to what was, both within them and outside of them," an assertion which, in effect, points beyond the realm of epistemology to the other issues Abrams raises.[13] Thus, as Abrams' comments suggest, what E.R. Dodd characterizes as "certain unsatisfied religious longings" can be understood as part of the imaginative revision involved in assimilating and reinterpreting religious ideas within the framework of a society growing progressively more secular.

In Romantic thought, Abrams notes, "it is the subject, mind or spirit which is primary and takes over the initiative and the functions which had once been the perogatives of deity."[14] The Romantic belief in the imagination is, in fact, part of their belief in the individual self and, in what Emerson terms "the infinitude of the private man."[15] "Each was confident," observes C.M. Bowra concerning the English Romantic poets, "not only that the imagination was his most precious possession but that it was somehow concerned with a supernatural order."

> For Blake the imagination is nothing less than God as He operates in the human soul. It follows that any act of creation performed by the imagination is divine and that in the imagination man's spiritual nature is fully and finely realized. Coleridge does not speak with so apocalyptic a certainty but his conclusion is not very different from Blake's:
>
>> The primary IMAGINATION I hold to be the living Power of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM.
>
> It is true that he regards poetry as a product of the secondary imagination but since this differs only in degree from the primary, it remains clear that for Coleridge the imagination is of the first importance because it partakes of the creative activity of God.[16]

As Bowra notes, this is "a tremendous claim, and it is not confined to Blake and Coleridge," nor, one might add, to English Romanticism itself.

Quentin Anderson's assertion that, in comparison to the "freezing absoluteness" of the Emersonian Transcendentalist's assertions of the supremacy of the self, Romanticism was "a laggard, anachronistically involved in a dialect of self and society " appears to have been advanced in complete disregard of the tremendous claims made for the self in earlier Romantic thought.[17] Moreover Anderson's assertion ignores Emerson's belief that "the individual imagination . . . is part of the Divine Mind," a belief which Emerson shared with the Romantic writers generally.[18] That belief involves not simply an assertion of the supremacy of the self but of the perceiving subject's participation in what Emerson terms the

"One Mind." "We lie," Emerson asserts in "Self-Reliance." "in the lap of immense intelligence, which makes us receivers of its truth and organs of its activity. When we discern justice, when we discern truth, we do nothing of ourselves, but allow a passage to its beams."[19]

Although the Romantics make tremendous claims for the self, they are not completely unaware of the perils involved. Emerson's own comments concerning the philosophy of Idealism, a philosophy he inherited, in part, from Germany largely as it was conceived and restated in the works of English thinkers like Carlyle and Coleridge, are characteristic of the Romantic concern with the self generally. If Idealism "only deny the existence of matter," Emerson asserts, "it does not satisfy the demands of the spirit. It leaves God out of me. It leaves me in the splendid labyrinth of my own perceptions, to wander without end."[20] Although, as Quentin Anderson suggests, Emerson "taught the theory and carried on the practice of secular incarnation," an activity in which all of the Romantic writers were more or less involved, he did so in the belief that the individual imagination was a particular manifestation of the universal, a belief underlying Romantic thought generally.[21] Thus, for example, Schelling asserts in his lecture "Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature:" "We do not ask for the individual, we ask to see more, namely its living idea. But if the artist recognizes the essence of the idea creating within him and stresses this he fashions the individual into a world of its own, a genus, an eternal prototype."[22]

On the other hand, to argue, as Earl R. Wasserman does, that "all of the Romantics . . . give extraordinary value to a faculty they call the imagination" simply because "they must postulate an extraordinary faculty that bridges the gap between mind and the external world," is misleading because it is founded upon a misunderstanding of the basis of Romantic thought.[23] For the Romantics begin, not with the dualism of subject and object, but, as Albert Gerard observes, with "the intuition of cosmic unity: the intuition that the universe is not an unintelligible chaos, nor a well-regulated mechanism, but a living organism, imbued throughout with an idea which endows it with its unity, its life and harmony."[24] Romantic thought begins, that is, with the intuition of a primal unity, a unity from which man is thought to have fallen; a unity which, the Romantics assert, can be regained. Romantic thought is thus primarily a metaphysic of reintegration, of which the key principle is that of the "reconciliation," or synthesis, of whatever is divided, opposed, and conflicting."[25]

Romantic thought has as its basis the design of Christian theology, a design in which the traditional Judaeo-Christian conception of Eden, Fall and Redemption have been translated into what Geoffrey Hartman terms "the new triad of nature, self-consciousness and imagination, while the last term in both involves a kind of return to the first."[26] Wedded to this vision is the Romantic conception of the universe as a living organism. As such it is conceived to be essentially "vital," alive, and in a state of continual development, animated from within by what Coleridge terms the "living Power," the Judaeo-Christian God no longer conceived as an anthropomorphic, personal deity but as the animating principle of life and the source of all creativity. The imagination is conceived to be one with this "living Power" and, thus, one with the germinal causes of nature. "Natural forms," Gerard points out, "are not then presented as an obstacle to vision or as the proper object of the vision: instead, their harmony and vitality are felt as the mark of the action of a superior force which remains transcendent."[27]

The imagination is thought not only to be one with the germinal causes in nature but, moreover, to function organically, that is, in a manner corresponding to the way in which the "infinite I AM" is observed as acting in nature. Taking up Schelling's ideas, Coleridge, in fact, identifies the unconscious as the source of the imagination and views the objective world as the unconscious projection of what becomes conscious in the subjective activity of the ego.[28] Thus, "the mystery of genius in the Fine Arts" is, for Coleridge, the ability "to make the external internal, the internal external, to make nature thought, and thought nature."[29] Furthermore, art, the creation of the imagination, is conceived, not as an imitation of external phenomenon, but as the visible embodiment of the indwelling Spirit. As such, art itself is regarded as organic. Indeed, form is for the Romantic artist always an organic event. "The form," Herbert Read states, "is realized by the artist in the act of intuition: in the moment of his penetration of the veil of appearances that separates man from the realm of essence."[30] Form is, however, never final; it is always secondary to the indwelling Spirit itself, the infinite within.

Harold Bloom's conception of English Romanticism as an internalization rather than a revival of romance needs to be understood within the context of the larger movement to humanize the divine.[31] In Romanticism, the conventional view of the artist as the celebrator of society's heroes gives way, Northrop Frye notes, to the conception of the artist himself as the primary vehicle of society's redemption. "In their age," Frye observes concerning the Romantics,

> the patron is beginning to disappear, and the poet is becoming immersed in society as a whole. But though he loses his traditional specific social functions (unless he preserves them by accident, like Goethe in Weimar), he gains a more important function, at least in his own eyes. He sees society as held together by its creative power, incarnate in himself, rather than by its leaders of action. Thus he himself steps into the role of the hero, not as personally heroic but simply as the focus of society. For him, therefore, the real event is no longer even the universal or typical historical event, but the psychological or mental event, the event in his own consciousness, of which the historical event is the outward sign or allegory.[32]

What develops in Romantic art, however, is not simply a distinction between two kinds of reality, between what Frye terms "the reality out there, which is studied by science and the reason from the point of view of a conscious subject perceiving objects" and the reality brought "into being through an act of creation," but a question concerning the nature of Ultimate Reality itself and its relation to the creative powers of the perceiving subject.[33] The Romantic artist proclaims the divinity of the creative imagination and seeks, through an intensification and expansion of consciousness, to be reborn into a life of the imagination, a life identified with supreme self-consciousness, the infinite I AM. The internalized quest-romance celebrates the struggle for such an expanded consciousness and the high virtue involved in attaining an awareness of the creative powers of one's own self, an awareness, that is, of one's identity with God and nature which, in most Romantic thought, is held as a prophecy of a "greater social awakening."[34]

III The Seventeenth-Century Origins of Spiritual Autobiography

What Harold Bloom terms the "internalized quest-romance" is, in many ways, actually related less to the quest-romance than to the spiritual autobiography, particularly as that form developed in the seventeenth century. Underlying the "internalized quest-romance," like the _Bildungsroman_ and the _Künstlersroman_ to which it is closely related, is, as M.H. Abrams points out, "the fifteen hundred-year-old tradition of religious confessional writing."[35] Yet, whereas the quest-romance, the spiritual autobiography, and what Bloom terms the "internalized quest-romance" share in common a structure based upon the design of Biblical eschatology, it is only in the latter two that the design is, in effect, internalized within the life of the individual. Although, Abrams notes, "Christian thought readily extended the reference of Biblical eschatology from the last day of the human race to the last day of the redeemed individual . . ."[36] it is only in the seventeenth century that a literary genre arose in which that internalization was given its distinctively modern form. The development of both the autobiography and the diary is associated with the Reformation, particularly with the Puritan movement, a movement which had a formative influence on the development of both English and American Romanticism.

What closely relates the spiritual autobiography to the internalized quest-romance is that both are concerned with the discovery of personal identity through spiritual transformation, a discovery in which an intimate relation exists between the author and the "I" of the work itself. That is, in both self-discovery is not only the subject of the work but, to a large extent, its method as well. As a result, the writers in both are supremely self-conscious. Moreover, in both the spiritual autobiography and the internalized quest-romance, the design of Biblical eschatology is the means used to structure and, thus, to give meaning to the individual's own personal struggles. The Bible, however, provides not only the structure of the work and the context within which that self-discovery takes place, but, in the 1611, authorized version, the example of its style as well.

As it developed in the seventeenth century, the spiritual autobiography was largely a consequence of Luther's internalization of religion. Luther's stress on the "spiritual, inner or new man" as opposed to the "carnal, outer or old man" and the emphasis he placed on the personal relationship between man and God "had the effect of internalizing many religious observances which formerly had been acted out publicly in sacraments and ceremonies."[37] As a consequence of the internalization, the individual tended to lose not only the sacramental value of confession but the sense of identity as something achieved in interaction with others as integral parts of society. "Both the denial of the minister's role as a bearer of God's grace on earth," Cynthia Wolff observes, "and the espousal of a Calvinist creed, which made the question of salvation foreordained and unique for each man, led inevitably to a concentration on the individual soul to the exclusion of all else."[38] Thus, in the opening pages of the Institutes of the Christian Religion, Calvin asserts: "Nearly all wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves."[39] The two Calvin understands to be inextricably related; they are mutually inclusive of each other and exclusive of all else. "Sums are best cast up in solitariness," states a devotional manual of the period, "retire into thyself; set thy heart on God's ways to thee and on thine own ways to him."[40]

The Puritan's image of himself was, in effect, split between his sense of utter isolation, of being imprisoned within his own sinful soul, and his hope of being among the Community of the Elect, a paradoxical position which, Cynthia Wolff argues, was "further unsettled by the repeated warning that an easy confidence in one's salvation was the surest sign of perdition."[41] The diary, which developed as a distinct literary form during this period, became for the Puritan an aid to self-study, in part because it objectified this split.

> If a man's principal religious occupation is an endless rehearsal of his motives and a continuing search after sinfulness, there must be some clear distinction between the 'self' that controls and examines and the 'self' that conceals. The Puritans wisely effected this distinction by evolving the religious diary, a literary form that was to become an alter ego or an objectified embodiment of the self. Used in conjunction with their private devotions, it was a form which captured daily moods, behavior, fears, hopes, sorrows, and joys, and preserved them that they might be reviewed and examined. The Puritan's diary, then, was not to be a record of the events in his life (and certainly not a record of the events in the world about him); it was, rather, to be a faithful accurate mirror of himself.[42]

The relation of diarist to diary actually corresponds to and has its basis in the distinction between the "carnal, outer or old man" and the "spiritual, inner or new man" which Luther stresses. Underlying both is, as Paul Delaney suggests in a somewhat different context, "the emergence of men who are able to imagine themselves in more than one role; who stand as it were outside or above their own personalities; who are protean."[43]

The purpose of the diary is not simply to enable the Puritan to describe the many selves he finds within himself but, ultimately, to aid him in discovering the underlying nature of that character, the birth of the "spiritual, inner or new man" within the "carnal, outer or old man" and, by so doing, to assure himself of his own salvation. As William Haller points out, the mystic birth for the Puritans was not that of Christ in the manger but the birth of the new man in men.[44] It was this birth that the diarist was intent upon discovering.

Whereas through the use of a diary the Puritan attempted privately to discover signs of his own salvation, of God's Grace to him, in the spiritual autobiography he endeavored to give a public account of his conversion, that is, of the birth of the New Adam in the Old. The Puritan might undertake to write his own spiritual autobiography "for the enlightenment of his children . . . for the instruction of his relatives and friends, or even for the public at large" or, as in the case of Bunyan's Grace Abounding, " . . . as a set exercise to be submitted as part of the requirements for entrance into the congregation of a non-conformist church."[45] In any event, the spiritual autobiography was understood to have a didactic function: it was, like a ship's log, of value both to the individual who kept it and to those who would undertake the same voyage.[46] As such, it balanced narration with serious reflection; an account of the event with an interpretation of its spiritual significance. Nevertheless it was written from the point of view of one confident of his own salvation, as proof of that salvation. Consequently the spiritual autobiographer adopted, to some extent at least, the stance of a preacher-prophet.

As G. A. Starr notes, underlying the rapid development of the spiritual autobiography as a distinct literary form in the seventeenth century was a principle underlying the Protestant stress on the spiritual life of the individual, "the principle that there are universal and recurrent elements in human affairs, particularly in vicissitudes of the soul. History repeats itself not only in man's outward, group existence, but in the spiritual life of the individuals."

> A man need not have done anything remarkable in the eyes of the world for his autobiography to be worthwhile; or, if his spiritual life did happen to be unique in its circumstances, or extraordinary in its intensity, it would nevertheless correspond with that of all other Christians, and be meaningful to them for this very reason. Thus Thomas Halyburton says of his autobiography, 'should the book ever fall into the hands of any other Christian, it may not prove unuseful to him, considering that the work of the Lord, in substance, is uniform and the same in all; and "as face answereth to face in a glass," so does one Christian's experience answer to another's and both to the word of God.'[47]

What characterizes these spiritual autobiographies is, thus, not their adherence to documentary facts but their consistent attempts to go beyond the merely documentary to the spiritual meaning thought to be inherent in the experience itself. "The spiritual autobiographer," Starr observes, "naturally found himself thinking 'what oft was thought,' and since he felt that it had been 'ne'er so well express'd' as in the Bible, he was content to employ the same imagery and turns of phrase."[48]

The 1611, authorized version of the Bible, "the conclusion of the effort of a long succession of English churchmen to put the word of God into the vernacular," was, as William Haller points out, "repeatedly and insistently alleged to be the perfect model of discourse offered to the use of man by no less a writer than the Holy Spirit himself."[49] This was true whether one was a lay preacher or a spiritual autobiographer.

> The primary rules in this democratic rhetoric of the spirit were found in the fourteenth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Corinthians. 'Let all things be done unto edifying,' says the apostle. To be able to speak strange tongues is good, but 'except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?' For the end of preaching is to make manifest to the unlearned stranger, the things of his own heart. 'In which words,' remarks William Perkins in his Treatise of the Duties and Dignities of the Ministrie, 'observe an admirable plainnesse and an admirable powerfulness,' That must be plain by which an unlearned man is enabled to perceive his own faults. That must be powerful which moves the unregenerate conscience to exclaim 'Certainely God speakes in this man!' Perkins elaborates the advice of Paul, still more explicitly in his Art of Prophecying. The minister must so frame his preaching 'that all, even ignorant persons and unbeleevers may judge that it is not so much he that speaketh, as the Spirit of God in him and and by him.'[50]

Both the spiritual autobiographer and the preacher labor to enable the Holy Spirit to speak in and through them. The purpose of the spiritual autobiographer, like that of the preacher, is "to make manifest to the unlearned stranger the things of his own heart." Moreover, each "was able out of his own experience to supply other pilgrims and warriors with a spiritual guidebook and a manual of arms:"[51] each was intent upon arousing in his readers an unsleeping opposition to the eternal enemy within and, through an account of the Holy Spirit's workings in him, in provoking those readers into undertaking the pilgrimage through suffering to a rebirth in the Spirit.

The great example of religious conversion for the Puritan was St. Paul's rather than St. Augustine's and, as Paul Delaney notes, the spiritual autobiographers "returned to the fountainhead of the Pauline epistles and, with but few exceptions, were remarkably little influenced by the Confessions."[52] Out of the Pauline epistles the spiritual autobiographers developed not only Paul's distinction between the letter and the spirit but also what Abrams terms the "polysemantics of simultaneous reference to the outer history of mankind and the spiritual history of the individual" and, thus, Paul's tendency to see in the events of his own life a fulfillment of biblical prophecy, an annihilation of the old creation and its replacement by a new heaven and new earth.[53]

IV The Romantic Conception of the "Growth of the Mind"

Although, as M. H. Abrams observes, "Christian thought readily extended the reference of Biblical eschatology from the last day of the human race to the last day of the redeemed individual, whose soul, at the time of his bodily death, is translated to heaven as the bride of the Lamb," what happened in Romantic thought was that

> the redemptive goal of the history of mankind was shifted from the reconciliation and reunion of man with a transcendent God to an overcoming of the opposition between ego and non-ego, or a reconciliation of subject and object, or a reunion of the spirit with its own other, and this culmination was represented as occurring in the fully developed consciousness of men living their

> lives in this world: the justification for the ordeal of human experience is located in the experience itself.[54]

Romantic thought, in effect, completes the internalization of religion begun in the Reformation by Luther and Calvin. Whereas the Reformation's emphasis on the "spiritual, inner or new man" as opposed to the "carnal, outer, or old man" had the effect of internalizing many religious observances, including that of confession, Romantic thought internalized the Divine itself and, with it, the concept of Redemption, which becomes a question of progressive self-education, an ideal attainable through an intensification and expansion of individual consciousness.

As a consequence of that internalization, Abrams notes, "the Christian history of the creation, fall and redemption was translated to the realm of human consciousness as stages, or 'movements,' in its evolving knowledge." Theological history is, in effect, transposed into the process of human education.

> In the initial act of self-consciousness knowledge which separates the knower from the known consists both of the creation of the world conceived as external to the knowing mind and also the fall of man from his primal innocence (equated with self-unity) into the knowledge of evil (equated with self division and conflict). But, if knowledge is initially analytic and divisive, it is also, in its higher manifestation, unifying and integrative; for the mind, when it fully succeeds in grasping and comprehending the thing it knows, assimilates that thing and makes it its own. In consequence, the redemptive goal of human life is envisaged as the ultimate stage of the collective consciousness of mankind when, by the fullness and perfection of its power of organizing knowing, it will utterly repossess everything

> which it has, in its early stages of imperfect and partial knowledge, separated and alienated as object to itself as subject.[55]

Although Romantic thought is thus primarily a metaphysic of reintegration, it does not seek a return to primal innocence. The ideal towards which the Romantics strive has been shifted, Abrams points out, "from the simple beginning to the complex end of an extended process" and, consequently, is conceived of as "higher" than the innocence lost, "not only because it preserves diversification and individuality, but also because, instead of being a condition which has merely been given to man, it is a condition which he must earn by incessant striving along an inclined circuitous path."[56]

The Romantic ideal, then, is one of self-discovery and realization through an assimilation and reintegration of the objects of experience. Romantic ideas of the self, Patricia Ball points out, consequently center on "the extension of personal boundaries."[57] Personality itself is conceived of, not as a constant or changeless center of identity, but as something dynamic and thus elusive, to be sought and achieved in and through experience. For example, J.H. Muirhead notes that Coleridge viewed "personality" as "a circumference continually expanding through sympathy and understanding, rather than as an exclusive centre of feeling and consequently . . . the meaning of individuality and uniqueness as something to be won."[58] Similarily, Ralph Waldo Emerson declares:

> The life of man is a self-evolving circle, which from a ring imperceptibly small, rushes on all sides outwards to new and larger circles, and that without end. The extent to which this

> generation of circles, wheel without wheel, will go, depends on the force of the individual's soul.[59]

In Romantic thought, the expansion of consciousness is elevated above all else. To stop expanding, to stop growing, is, in effect, to die within oneself, a death in life. "The only sin," asserts Emerson, "is limitation."[60]

Although the internalization within the individual of the ultimate grounds of all reality promises to liberate the individual through an expansion of consciousness, it, at the same time, threatens to imprison him forever within that consciousness. "The limits of each person's now inevitable private universe," notes Joseph F. Doherty, "comes to be defined by the reach of the individual mind in which that universe is totally contained."[61] Each expansion of consciousness threatens to become nothing more than an intensification of self-consciousness and, thus, to leave the individual irrevocably enclosed within the "splendid labyrinth of his own perceptions," there to wander without end. "The high cost of Romantic internalization," Harold Bloom points out, "that is, of finding paradises within a renovated man, shows itself in the arena of self-consciousness. The quest is to widen consciousness as well as to intensify it, but the quest is shadowed by a spirit that tends to narrow consciousness to an acute preoccupation with self."[62] The nihilism which can result is aptly described by J. Hillis Miller as "the nothingness of consciousness when consciousness becomes the foundation of everything. Man the murderer of God and drinker of the sea of creation wanders through the infinite nothingness of his own ego."[63]

If Luther's internalization of religious observances threatens to leave the individual in a state of isolation, alone to confront his God, the effect of Romantic thought is to even more completely isolate the individual. One of the most prevalent symbols for the individual mind in Romantic literature is that of the cavern or abyss and, as David Perkins points out with regard to Wordsworth's use of the symbol, its principal implication "is an inevitable, and fearful, isolation from any external medium through which the mind can be healthfully governed." There is also, Perkins observes, "the suggestion of fertility and creation . . . but the effect of the image is to emphasize the solitude even of imaginative creation."

> Of course, Wordsworth is never so thoroughgoing as Blake, who at times conceives that every man creates and inhabits his own private universe. But he did assume that each man's vision is too unique and personal to be completely communicated. Hence the stress on the inadequacy of words. Even when most successfully used, they are in effect a compromise. When men possessing 'the vision and the faculty divine' are 'grasping with their greatest strength,' words are often 'but the under-agents in their souls.' In the main, 'the visionary power lies in the soul's deep valley' where it is 'far hidden from the reach of words,' far, in fact, 'from any reach of outward fellowship.'[64]

For the Romantic writer, the internalization within the individual of the ultimate grounds of all reality raises questions concerning not only the nature of the relation between self and not-self, the human mind or consciousness and the objects of its awareness, but questions concerning the possibility of achieving any means of expression whatsoever. The Romantic writer, in effect, feels himself removed not only from his fellow man but from all external means of expression.

Moreover, because the Romantics are extremely self-conscious, they are also acutely aware of playing roles. Indeed, George Mead points out: "For Descartes, I am conscious and therefore exist; for the romanticist, I am conscious of myself and therefore this self of which I am conscious, exists and with it the objects it knows."[65] Romantic thought is, in effect, "a way of knowing through playing roles."[66] All knowledge ultimately becomes self-knowledge: the Romantic discovers himself either in the act of projecting himself into the object and playing its role or, through assimilating the object within itself and recreating it anew. In either instance, subject and object are identical: the subject "knows" the object by becoming one with it.

"The Romantic sense of the self as an experiencing agent," notes Patricia Ball, "habitually seeks two kinds of imaginative expression."[67] These two contrasting creative modes, described by Keats as the "egotistical sublime" and the "chameleon," are, for the Romantics, epitomized in the Miltonic and the Shakespearean forms of genius. Thus, Coleridge states that while Shakespeare "darts himself forth, and passes into all forms of human character and passion, the one Proteus of the fire and the flood; the other [Milton] attracts all things to himself, into the unity of his own idea." "All things and modes of action," declares Coleridge, "shape themselves anew in the being of Milton; while Shakespeare becomes all things, yet forever remaining himself."[69]. However, while Coleridge contrasts these two forms of genius, he does not ultimately view them as mutually exclusive, but as "the glory-smitten summits of the poetic mountain." In Romantic thought, they are, as John Bayley points out, conceived as "complementary . . . two different ways of looking at the same thing; and this Keats admits as he sets up his concept of Negative Capability as the other half of what he calls Wordsworth's 'Egotistical Sublime.'"[69]

Underlying both conceptions, moreover, is the assumption that creativity is a function of self-discovery, that is, of the artist's attempt to expand his own consciousness and, thereby, become one with the Ground of all Being. "For the quest of the soul, the attaining of man's ultimate identity," observes Northrop Frye, "the traditional metaphors were upward ones, following the movement of the ascension of Christ, though they were there even before the Psalmist lifted up his eyes to the hills. In Romanticism," he points out, "the main direction of the quest tends increasingly to be downward and inward, toward a hidden basis or ground of identity between man and nature."[70] If the artist himself is elevated to a new and more vital place in Romantic thought, it is as the exemplary seeker of such an expanded consciousness. In dramatizing this search and in stepping into the role of hero himself, the Romantic writer not only revitalizes an ancient literary theme, that of the Solitary or Wandering Jew, but, as Geoffrey Hartman recognizes, creates his own distinctive genre.[71] In that genre, which Bloom terms the "internalized quest-romance" and Abrams "creative autobiography," both forms of the Romantic genius are apparent. In working out the great Romantic theme, that of "the growth of the poet's mind," these writers in effect dramatize their own inner struggles, what Hartman terms "the confrontation of person with shadow and self with self." That is, the work of art itself becomes a means of achieving objectivity: it becomes an "anti-self," an embodiment of "unselfconsciousness" through the creation of which the poet escapes from personality.[72]

V Subjectivity and the Romantic Conception of Art

As M. H. Abrams points out, the chief antecedent of the narrative form the Romantics develop is "the Christian allegory of the journey of life."

> The wayfaring Christian on his laborious pilgrimage to heaven-haven, however, is converted into a hero whose voyage is an education in experience through stages of awareness which culminate on the level of intellectual maturity--a stage of integrity, power, and freedom in which the protagonist finally learns who he is, what he was born for, and the implicit purpose of all that he has endured on the way. Behind many Romantic versions of the internal circuitous quest we can recognize the chief prototype of the circular variant of the ancient Christian peregrinatio, that is, the parable of the Prodigal Son interpreted as the type of the journey of all mankind out of and back toward its original home: and in Romantic literature, this parable is frequently conflated with the apocolyptic marriage that signalized the restoration of Eden in the Book of Revelation. Accordingly, the yearning for fulfillment is sometimes expressed as Heimweh, the

> homesickness for the father or mother and for the lost sheltered place; or else the desire for a female figure who turns out to be the beloved we have left behind; or sometimes, disconcertingly, as the desire for father, mother, home, and bride all in one.[73]

Frequently, however, "the wayfaring Christian" is not only the hero of the work but, as in the seventeenth century autobiographies, its narrator as well. What he writes is, in effect, not so much a narrative of his voyage as the voyage itself. In the act of writing, the Romantic artist undertakes the internal circuitous quest from innocence, through self-consciousness, to a life of the imagination. The object of that quest is self-realization through a union of subject and object, creator and creation in a distinction without division. Thus, the motif of the journey which, for the Puritan autobiographers had been a sustained metaphor for self-discovery and the attainment of ultimate identity through reunion with a transcendent deity, becomes, for the Romantics, a sustained metaphor not only for self-discovery but, also, "for the experience of the artist in creation."[74]

In Romantic literature the artist's relation to his artwork becomes, for the artist himself, a paradigm of the subject-object relationship and the completed artwork, a symbol of higher integration, the overcoming of the subject-object dualism through an organized unity. Thus, in his lecture "Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature," Schelling asserts:

> It is in the work of art that the problem of the division which philosophy makes between thought

> and things first finds its solution: in this the division ceases, idea and reality merge in the individual representation. Art thus effects the impossible by resolving an infinite contradiction in a finite product--a result it achieves through the power of the 'productive intuition' we call 'Imagination.'[75]

The artwork itself is conceived as a revelation of the reality of the creative imagination, a revelation which may, however, be "qualified by the realization that the goal is an infinite one which lies forever beyond the reach of man, whose possibilities are limited by the conditions of a finite world." That is, approximation may be substituted for attainment, "making success in life depend on man's sustaining his infinite aspirations throughout the course of his finite existence."[76] Thus, as Geoffrey Hartman notes, the journey for the Romantic typically "does not lead to what is generally called a truth: some final station for the mind. It remains as problematic a crossing as that from death to second life and from exile to redemption."[77]

If, as Patricia M. Ball observes, "the relationship of poet to poem holds for them [the Romantics] a distinctive place in the whole issue of self and not-self,"[78] it is thus because art is, for the Romantic writers, nothing less than "the visible embodiment of the nature of being," that is, of the supernatural order underlying all existence and, consequently, in itself an assertion of man's ability to overcome subjectivity through a union of subject and object, a union achieved through a continual expansion of consciousness and ultimate identity with what Coleridge terms "the supreme

Self-consciousness," the infinite within.[79] As Herbert Read points out, art is, in effect, conceived by the Romantics as having "an evolutionary function in relation to human consciousness," a function involving the intensification and expansion of consciousness.[80] Art is, in itself, simultaneously both the means by which the artist attains his own identity through a union with the Ground of all Being, supreme Self-consciousness, and a permanent revelation to others of the reality of that greater consciousness.

Self-discovery, "the growth of the poet's mind," thus becomes not only the great Romantic theme and the means of artistic creation but its end as well. Indeed the work of art tends to become secondary to the Spirit glimpsed between the lines. The work itself is conceived as a screen or mask--a mediating fiction--through which the artist, intentionally or unconsciously, reveals this inner Spirit to the readers. "Where it is worth the trouble," J.G. Herder states, "this living reading, this divination into the soul of the author, is the sole mode of reading, and the most profound means of self-development."[81]

Underlying the Romantic conception of art and, indeed, self-expressive theories of art generally, is the recognition of a correlation between art and personality. For the Romantic writers, however, this correlation is set in the context of their belief that each individual, however unique, is involved in a common quest for self-realization, a quest through nature and self-consciousness to a life of the imagination. "The Romantics," as Albert Gerard observes, "allow themselves to be self-centered because they regard themselves as suitable representatives of mankind: as Keats said, 'A Man's life of any worth is a continual allegory.'"[82] For the Romantic writers, as for their Puritan predecessors, the archetypal pattern for the interiorized quest is provided by the Bible. Like the earlier autobiographers as well, the Romantics are committed to the inner self and to the idea of being "twice-born," a conception which, for the Puritan, involves conversion to a life in Christ, but, for the Romantic, a conversion to a life of the imagination. Moreover, like the spiritual autobiographers, the Romantic writers strive, in the act of writing, to enable the indwelling Spirit to speak in and through them. Both assume the role and the stance of poet-prophets and attempt, though in different ways, to arouse within their readers an unsleeping opposition to all they conceive as life-denying. And, like the earlier spiritual autobiographers, the Romantics attempt out of their own experiences to provide "a spiritual guidebook and a manual of arms."

However, the Romantics' internalization within the individual of the ultimate grounds of all reality results in their feeling more strongly and thus, in their being more self-conscious about, the fear Milton expresses in the opening lines of the ninth book of Paradise Lost. There, although he reiterates his claim to divine inspiration and speaks of his "Celestial Patroness" who, he asserts, "deignes/

Her nightly visitation unimplor'd,/ And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires/ Easie my unpremeditated Verse," Milton nonetheless expresses the fear that what he writes may all "be mine,/ Not Hers who brings it nightly to my Ear."[83] That is, he fears that he may not succeed in giving himself over completely to the "Heavenly Muse" and, consequently, that what he writes may all be his and not the words of the Heavenly Muse speaking in him and through him. That fear was more acute for the spiritual autobiographers of Milton's day who labored to enable the Holy Spirit to speak in them and by them in the very act of relating their own personal experiences. It was, however, even more intense for the Romantic writers who labored to make themselves vehicles for the imagination but who, at the same time, were still more acutely aware of the correlation between art and personality and who had no assurance apart from themselves of the reality of the infinite I AM. The failure of their attempts to go beyond self-consciousness, to go beyond the confines of their own personality would, as the Romantics were so acutely aware, leave them forever prisoners within their necessarily private universe. Thus, as Geoffrey Hartman observes, "subjectivity --even solipsism--becomes the subject of poems which qua poetry seek to transmute it."[84]

VI The Search for a "Valid Subjectivity"

In an essay entitled "Thoughts on Modern Literature," published as the leading article in the second number of the Dial, Ralph Waldo Emerson indicates his own awareness of the subjective nature of Romantic art and of the literary implications of that subjectivity. In that essay, Emerson attempts to identify the distinctive characteristics of "the poetry and speculation of the age . . . which discriminates them from the works of earlier times." Their single, most distinctive characteristic, he suggests, is what he terms their "subjectiveness, as the eye is withdrawn from the object and fixed on the subject or mind." Identifying his age as subjective, Emerson attempts to define the nature of that subjectivity in order to differentiate it from what he considers the narrow-minded concerns of those who, "in all ages, but now more . . . have no interest in anything but in its relation to their personality."[85]

Emerson is, in fact, very much disturbed by what he terms a "pernicious ambiguity in the use of the term subjective."[86] In commenting on the two different meanings Emerson ascribes to this word, F. O. Matthiessen states:

> On the one hand, it could simply mean that a man had no interest in anything save as it related to his own personality, a morbid self-indulgence. On the other hand, 'a man may say I, and never refer to himself as an individual' --such is the valid subjectivity that arises from the perception that 'there is One Mind, and that all the powers and privileges which lie in any, lie in all.' That was the beacon

> Emerson believed could dispel the fogs of the romantic cultivation of the ego, for 'the great always introduce us to facts; small men introduce us always to themselves.'[87]

Emerson felt the need to make such a distinction, Matthiessen suggests, because "he was concerned with consciousness not with self-consciousness. He wanted to study the laws of the mind, what he called throughout life the natural history of the intellect, but he always felt a repugnance to self-centred introversion."[88] It would probably be more correct, however, to state that Emerson made the distinction because he was concerned with the nature of the relationship between self-consciousness and consciousness itself, as an attribute of what he termed the "One Mind." For, as Emerson recognized, it was only through self-consciousness that this greater consciousness could be achieved. Thus, in the Dial article Emerson attempts to defend the subjectivity of contemporary literature by pointing beyond that subjectivity to a universal experience. "The great man," argues Emerson, "even whilst he relates a private fact personal to him, is really leading us away from his to an universal experience."[89] Genius he defines as the ability "to believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men."[90]

As Emerson's comments indirectly suggest, the Romantic search for a "valid subjectivity" and for what Geoffrey Hartman terms an "anti-self-consciousness," a way out of the morass of inwardness, involves, at least in part, an attempt to establish a literary mode in which the writer is, in effect, both in the work and out of it at the same time, a mode in which there is a marriage of subject and object and of creator and creation in a distinction without division. "The very confusion in modern literary theory concerning the fictive 'I,' whether it represents the writer as a person or a persona," Hartman suggests, "may reflect a dialectic inherent in poetry between the relatively self-conscious self, and the self within the self which resembles Blake's 'emanation' and Shelley's 'epipsyche.'"[91]

Certainly this dialectic is evident in Romantic literature. The Romantic emphasis on organic form and on the role of the unconscious in the creative process is, as Hartman also indirectly suggests, related to the attempt to develop an adequate means of expressing the infinite within, the self within the self which yet transcends the individual.

> Unconsciousness remains an ambiguous term in the Romantic and Victorian periods, referring to a state distinctly other than consciousness or simply to un-*self*-consciousness. The characteristic of right performance, says Carlyle, in *Characteristics* (1831), is an *unconsciousness*--'the healthy know not of their health, but only the sick.' The term clearly approaches here its alternate meaning of unselfconsciousness, and it is to such statements that Mill must be indebted when he mentions the 'anti-self-consciousness' theory of Carlyle. In America, Thoreau perpetuates the ambiguity. He also prescribes 'unconsciousness' for his sophisticated age, and uses the word as an equivalent of vision: 'the absence of the speaker from the speech.' It does seem to me that the personal and expressive theory of poetry, ascribed to the Romantics, and the impersonal theory of poetry, claimed in reaction by the moderns, answers to the same problem and are quietly linked by the ambiquity in 'unconsciouness.' Both theories value art as though recreated into feeling or self-consciousness into a more communal power of vision.[92]

In Romantic thought the primary vehicle for this "more communal power of vision" is the symbol which, like the greater reality it is thought to body forth, is conceived in organic terms. Indeed, in most Romantic thought the symbol is conceived as reconciling within itself the division of subject and object, unconscious and conscious, the infinite and the finite and, consequently, is advanced by both Schelling and Coleridge as representative of Ultimate Reality. Coleridge defines the symbol as an actual part of the reality it represents, "consubstantial" with the truth, "a living part in that unity, of which it is the representative."[93] In any event, the symbol is understood to exist prior to, and thus, ultimately, to be independent of the individual consciousness in which it makes itself manifest.

As Albert Gerard points out, the purpose of the poet in Romantic thought is consequently "not to fabricate an artifact according to a formal pattern pre-existing in his mind; it is to provide a total and accurate rendering of the germinal idea which stirs his imagination."[94] Thus Coleridge states that Shakespeare creates by "evolving the germ within." If, as M. H. Abrams observes, the substitution in Romantic thought of "the concept of growth for the operation of mechanism in the psychology of invention : . . makes it difficult, analogically, to justify the participation of consciousness in the creative process," that substitution nonetheless provides an objective basis for Romantic art while, at the same time, accounting for its subjective origins.[95] For, although the artist is thought to create out of himself by evolving the germ within, the artwork he evolves is understood to be both inherently teleological and complete in itself. The artist, in effect, becomes a midwife for the germinal idea within himself. Thus Nathaniel Hawthorne, for example, preferred the sketch to the final work of art because he feared "that the artist [would] cover the 'celestial germ' with layers of his own personality, and prevent the flowering of the 'innermost germ' into a full organic whole."[96]

As Hawthorne's fear indicates, there is in Romantic thought commonly a tension between the elements of conscious and unconscious activity involved in the creative process. "He who combines the two," asserts Coleridge, "is the man of genius; and for that reason he must partake of both. Hence there is in genius itself an unconscious activity; nay, that is the genius of the man of genius."[97] Nevertheless, as M.H. Abrams points out, Coleridge himself was "determined to demonstrate that a poet like Shakespeare 'never wrote anything without design.' 'What the plant is by an act not its own and unconsciously,' Coleridge exhorts us, 'that must thou make thyself to become.'"[98]

In Romantic thought, the symbol is most frequently defined in relation to allegory, a mode to which the Romantics usually contrast it. Whereas, in allegory, the image is thought to stand in a mechanical, one-to-one relationship with the idea it represents, in symbolic writing, the symbol is conceived as containing within itself the idea it represents while, at the same time, embodying that idea so that it remains infinitely active. For example, Goethe states that "allegory changes a phenomenon into a concept, a concept into an image, but in such a way that the concept is still limited and completely kept and held in the image and expressed by it," while symbolism "changes the phenomenon into the idea, the idea into the image, in such a way that the idea remains always infinitely active and unapproachable in the image, and will remain inexpressible even though expressed in all languages."[99]

Not surprisingly perhaps, the Bible is offered by the Romantics as the great example of symbolic language, a fact which suggests that the Romantic conception of the symbol, like its conception of nature generally, has its origins in the Judaeo-Christian conception of God and of His relation to His creation. In _The Statesman's Manual_ Coleridge develops his conception of the symbol by drawing a parallel between secular and biblical history on the one hand, and allegory and symbol, on the other.

> The histories and political economy of the present and preceding century partake in the general contagion of its mechanic philosophy, and are the product of an unenlivened generalizing Understanding. In the Scriptures they are the living educts of the imagination; of that reconciling and mediatory power, which, incorporating the reason in images of the sense, and organizing (as it were) the flux of the senses by the permanance and self-circling energies of the reason, gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves, and consubstantial with the truths of which they are the conductors.[100]

As J.V. Baker points out, "Coleridge does not necessarily derive his conception of the symbol from contemporary German aesthetic thought, for as early as "Religious Musings" (1794) he possessed the prevalent idea of nature as a veil . . .

through which nature's essence or Divine Being shone or manifested itself."[101]

The Romantics' symbolic conception of nature (a conception which, Albert Gerard points out, enables Coleridge to account satisfactorily for his intuition of the infinite's identity with nature and yet, avoid what was for him the pitfall of pantheism,[102] an impious equation of creator and creation) enabled them generally to relate the artist to the artwork without, at the same time, completely identifying the two. The Romantics, M. H. Abrams argues, "gives new application to the Renaissance metaphor of the poet as creator, with its implicit analogy between God's creation of the world and the artist's making of a poem."[103] The work of art becomes, like God's creation, a veil behind which the artist is concealed but through which his being is, nonetheless, made manifest. "One ought to be able to regard each book," J. G. Herder argues, "as the impression [Abdruck] of a living human soul. . . . The more discreet and judicious reader . . . endeavors rather to read the spirit of the author than the book; the farther he penetrates into this, the brighter and more clear everything becomes."[104]

The use the Romantics make of the analogy between God's creation of the world and the poet's making of a poem as an "intellectual model for conceiving the poem as a disguised projection of its auther" is not entirely new:

> Ultimately this concept goes back to a very old idea as to God's relation to his created universe. The primitive text setting forth this idea is in

> Paul's Epistle to the Romans, 1.20: 'For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead . . .' The Church Fathers in the early Middle Ages, inveterate allegorizers, expanded greatly on this passage . . . Some medieval writers, such as Aquinas and Dante . . . had maintained that secular works of literature may, like the Scriptures, be made 'polysemous,' or significant both of literal and various kinds of allegorical truths. Schlegel . . . proposes what, in distinction from the medieval theory, we may call romantic polysemism. According to Schlegel, a 'romantic' work may be multiple in meaning, but in the particular sense of having, like God's creation, bi-directional reference--both outward and inward, 'objective' and 'subjective.'[105]

The Romantic assertion of an outward-inward, bi-directional reference gives rise to a subjective hermeneutic, one based less on grammatical rules than on what Friedrich Schleiermacher, for example, terms one man's "receptiveness" (empfänglichkeit) to another because of their shared humanity. To understand a writer's works, the Romantics assert, it is necessary to reproduce the inner form of the writer's thoughts as well as the outer form of his written statements. The basis for such a subjective, intuitive procedure they find in the fact that ". . . the individuality of the exegete and that of its author do not stand opposed to each other as two facts which cannot be compared."[106]

The nature of the relation between the Romantic artist and the artwork he creates out of himself and, between that artwork and its readers, is indirectly suggested by Nathaniel Hawthorne in his discussion, in the opening lines of "The Custom House" introduction to The Scarlet Letter, of the "autobiographical impulse" that led him to preface his novel with an account of his three years of experience in a Custom House. "The truth seems to be," Hawthorne states, ". . . that when he casts his leaves forth upon the wind, the author addresses, not the many who will fling aside his volume, or never take it up, but the few who will understand him, better than most of his schoolmates and life-mates." "Some authors," he notes,

> indeed, do far more than this, and indulge themselves in such confidential depths of revelation as could fittingly be addressed, only and exclusively, to the one heart and mind of perfect sympathy; as if the printed book, thrown at large on the wide world, were certain to find out the divided segment of the writer's own nature, and complete his circle of existence by bringing him into communion with it. It is scarcely decorous, however, to speak all, even where we speak impersonally. But, as thoughts are frozen and utterance benumbed, unless the speaker stand in some true relation with his audience, it may be pardonable to imagine that a friend, a kind and apprehensive, though not the closest friend, is listening to our talk; and then, a native reserve being thawed by this genial consciousness, we may prate of the circumstances that lie around us, and even of ourself, but still keep the inmost Me behind its veil. To this extent, and within these limits, an author, methinks, may be autobiographical, without violating either the reader's rights or his own.[107]

Although Hawthorne professes his desire to "stand in some true relation with his audience," the reason he gives for writing "The Custom House" sketch is to establish himself as the editor of the work rather than its author. "This, in fact,--a desire to put myself in my true position as an editor, or very little more, of the most prolix among the tales that make my volume,--this, and no other, is my true reason for assuming a personal relation with the public." Hawthorne, in effect, admits to an "autobiographical impulse" in "The Custom House" introduction to The Scarlet Letter in order to mask the subjective origins of the novel itself. As Robert Langbaum points out, "it is only when meaning becomes in an epistemological sense a personal creation that the distinction between the subjective and objective statement breaks down and the poet feels it necessary to mask the subjective origin of his idea, to expend art to objectify it."[108]

And yet; in asserting his "true position" as little more than the tale's editor, Hawthorne is not being insincere. For, as "The Custom House" sketch itself makes evident, Hawthorne conceives himself as standing in relation to the novel as an editor stands in relation to a manuscript. Thus, in relating his "discovery" of the cloth letter, Hawthorne states:

> My eyes fastened themselves upon the old scarlet letter and would not be turned aside. Certainly, there was some deep meaning in it most worthy of interpretation and which, as it were, streamed forth from the mystic symbol, subtly communicating itself to my sensibilities, but evading the analysis of my mind.[109]

As Charles Feidelson points out, in The Scarlet Letter "every character, in effect, re-enacts the 'Custom House' scene in which Hawthorne himself contemplates the letter, so that the entire 'romance' becomes a kind of exposition of the nature of symbolic perception."[110] That the nature of symbolic perception involves a form of communication evading the analysis of the mind itself, Hawthorne's comments clearly indicate. Hawthorne regards the deep meaning of the "mystic symbol" as inherent in the scarlet letter itself. The meaning "streamed forth" from the letter: it is not projected on it by the perceiving subject, in this case the author, and yet the author's perception is what the reader is asked to respond to.

Hawthorne's comments suggest not only the nature of the Romantic artist's relation to his artwork, but the nature of his relation to his readers as well. Indeed, in the opening pages of "The Custom House" sketch, Hawthorne attempts to set out the limits within which an author "may be autobiographical, without violating either the reader's rights or his own." The limits, however, are not as clear-cut as Hawthorne suggests they are. For, although Hawthorne thinks it improper for an author to "indulge" himself in "confidential depths of revelation . . . as if the printed book, thrown at large on the wide world, were certain to find out the divided segment of the writer's own nature, and complete his circle of existence by bringing him in communion with it," he, nevertheless, confesses that when an author publishes a work he addresses "not the many who will fling aside his volume, or never take it up, but the few who will understand him, better than most of his schoolmates and lifemates." Consequently, if the friend Hawthorne imagines is not "the closest friend," not a "heart and mind of perfect sympathy," he is one who will understand the author better than most of the author's life-long friends.

The only limit that Hawthorne effectively sets upon the autobiographical impulse is that the author restrict himself to discussing those subjects which, on the basis of a "shared humanity," he can assume he has in common with his readers.

The limit Hawthorne establishes thus closely parallels that which, for Emerson, separates egotism from a valid subjectivity. In relating a personal fact private to himself the writer must lead the reader away from himself to a universal experience. In the preface to Mosses From An Old Manse Hawthorne states:

> Has the reader gone wandering, hand in hand with me, through the inner passages of my being? and have we groped together into all chambers and examined their treasures or their rubbish? Not so, We have been standing on the greensward, but just within the cavern's mouth, where the common sunshine is free to penetrate, and where every footstep is therefore free to come. I have appealed to no sentiment or sensibilities save such as are diffused among us all. So far as I am a man of really individual attributes I veil my face.[111]

Hawthorne's comments betray his acute self-consciousness regarding the subjective origins of his art. In his preface he attempts to argue for a concern with the self trancending the blind self-love traditionally personified in the figure of Narcissus.

As Hawthorne's comments suggest, the work of art is, for the Romantic writer, not simply a mediating fiction, a link between the subjective and objective worlds, but a veil or mask behind which he conceals his inmost self, those attributes of his personality uniquely his. If the Romantics conceive of literature as, in some sense, a revelation of personality, it is only a partial revelation at best. Although the Romantics themselves recognize a correlation between art and personality, in their art they attempt to transcend the purely subjective, to escape from personality by discovering some basis for objectivity within the self.

VII Conclusion

It is because of the increasing tendency in the innovative thought of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to locate within the individual himself the ultimate ground of all reality and because, as a consequence of that tendency, the self threatens to become All; that is, to reduce all that lies outside the self to a function or projection of individual consciousness, that Romantic literature is so markedly subjective. For the Romantics subjectivity is less a matter of choice than an inescapable condition. Their primary concern, however, is not subjectivity *per se*, but the possibility of overcoming subjectivity and achieving objectivity. This the Romantics attempt to accomplish through self-discovery and realization. The Romantic's basic faith is that if he descends deeply enough within the self he will ultimately reach the universal or unconscious.

The Romantics' concern with the growth of the mind arises out of their attempt to transcend the self by descending into it. Their concern with the growth of the mind gives rise not only to the major theme of early nineteenth-century literature, but to a distinctively Romantic literary form as well, one which, like the seventeenth-century spiritual autobiography to which it is closely related, is concerned with the discovery of personal identity through spiritual transformation. Like the seventeenth-century spiritual autobiographies, Romantic creative autobiographies are structured upon the design of Biblical eschatology, a design which, in both, is internalized within the life of the individual. However, the redemptive goal of Romantic creative autobiographies is not--as it is in the seventeenth-century spiritual autobiographies--the reconciliation of man with a transcendent God, but an overcoming of the opposition between subject and object or a reunion of the self with shadow, and this reconciliation is presented as occurring in the fully developed consciousness of men living their lives in this world. In Romantic literature the artist's relation to his artwork frequently becomes, for the artist himself, a paradigm of the subject-object relationship and the completed artwork, a symbol of higher integration, the overcoming of the subject-object dualism through an organized unity. Consequently, in Romantic literature, the motif of the journey becomes not only a figure for self-discovery and realization, but a metaphor for the experience of the artist in creation.

The Romantics discover the means of self-transcendence and, thus, of literary expression, in the concept of the symbol. In most Romantic thought the symbol is conceived as reconciling within itself the division of subject and object, unconscious and conscious, the infinite and the finite, and, consequently is frequently celebrated as representative of Ultimate Reality, in Coleridge's words, "a living part in that reality, of which it is the representative." The symbol is thought to exist prior to and, ultimately, to be independent of the individual consciousness in which it makes itself manifest. Consequently, the function of the poet as conceived in Romantic thought is not to fabricate an artwork according to a given pattern but to provide a total and accurate rendering of the germinal idea which stirs his imagination. Although the Romantics' use of the concept of organic growth to describe the creative process makes it difficult, analogically, for them to explain the role of consciousness in the act of creation, it does provide an objective basis for their art while, at the same time, accounting for its subjective origins.

CHAPTER THREE

MELVILLE AND THE "WORLD OF MIND"

Melville was not, in even the broadest sense of the term, a literary theorist. At no point in his career did he attempt to formulate a consistent theory of art. Nevertheless, early in his literary career, Melville did develop definite views concerning the nature and function of art and of the artist's relation to his artwork. These views he expressed in his letters, in his journals, in the margins of the many books he read and, in the reviews he wrote for The Literary World, most notably, in his review of Hawthorne's Mosses From An Old Manse. Although Melville's comments are scattered in both time and place and, although they are, in many instances, fragmentary, they nevertheless indicate that Melville's thinking on all aspects of art was remarkably consistent.[1]

The purpose of this chapter is to examine Melville's comments concerning the nature and function of art, particularly his comments concerning the nature of the artist's relation to his artwork and to his readers, in order to determine the extent to which they correspond to those in Romantic thought and literature regarding subjectivity and the growth of the mind. The extent to which the Romantic conception of the growth of the mind is useful to an understanding of Melville's fiction, particularly his use of the first-person narrator, is the subject of Chapter Four.

I Melville's "Consuming Inward Growth" and His Development as an Author

Undoubtedly the best known and the most complete statement of Melville's views concerning the nature and function of art is contained in his wide-ranging and ecstatic review of Hawthorne's Mosses From An Old Manse. Melville read that book and wrote his review of it at a critical stage in his own inward growth and in his development as an artist. "My development," he wrote Hawthorne less than a year later, "has been all within a few years past."

> I am like one of those seeds taken out of the Egyptian Pyramids, which, after being three thousand years a seed and nothing but a seed, being planted in English soil, it developed itself, grew to greenness, and then fell to mould. So I. Until I was twenty-five, I had no development at all. From my twenty-fifth year I date my life. Three weeks have scarcely passed between then and now, that I have not unfolded within myself. But I feel that I am now come to the inmost leaf of the bulb, and that shortly the flower must fall to the mould. (L, 130)

Melville, in effect, dates his own experience of being "twice-born" and, his subsequent inward growth, from the year in which he wrote Typee. His use of the organic metaphor to describe his own inward growth not only suggests the rapidity and consuming nature of that growth but, at the same time, Melville's sense of being in the grips of a force superior to himself, a force which nevertheless originates from within.

In his review of Hawthorne's Mosses From An Old Manse, Melville similarly conveys the impression that in reading that work, he has been seized by a power superior to himself, a power which mystically unites him with its author. It has become a commonplace of Melville criticism to observe that, in writing his review of Hawthorne's book, Melville inadvertently revealed as much about himself and his own conception of art as he does about Hawthorne.[2] His response to Hawthorne's writings is, in short, considered to be almost entirely subjective. Certainly the impassioned nature of the review and the haste with which Melville wrote it lend credence to this view. Nevertheless, as John D. Seelye and, more recently, Edgar Dryden have recognized, however spontaneous and real that encounter was for Melville at the time, in writing his review of Hawthorne's book, Melville speaks not in his own person but as "A Virginian Spending the Summer in Vermont."[3] Thus, as John D. Seelye notes, "although the background of this review is factual (that is, Melville read and was excited about the Mosses)," it is, "like that other apparent non-fiction, Typee . . . sufficiently larded with gratuitous inclusions to remove it from the realm of conventional reviews." "As always," Seelye observes, "in order to tell the truth, Melville was inclined to alter the facts."[4] Thus the review's first-person narrator describes Hawthorne, a Northerner, dropping "germinous seeds" into the narrator's Southern soul in a symbolic marriage of the two. "He expands and deepens down, the more I contemplate him," the Virginian exclaims, "and further and further, shoots his strong New England roots into the hot soil of my Southern soul" (HHM, 548).

If Melville does, indeed, discover himself and his literary identity in reading Hawthorne's work, and there is little reason to doubt either the sincerity or the immediacy of Melville's response despite the review's tendency toward the symbolic, the discovery made is of his ultimate identity in what, in the review itself, is termed "the mystical, ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty, which ubiquitously possesses men of genius"(HHM, 536). In "Hawthorne and his Mosses" Melville portrays himself as a man possessed by just such a Spirit, a Spirit which unites him with the author of the Mosses in a momentary but decisive "shock of recognition." Moreover, in making the encounter one between the North and the South, he suggests the larger union involved. What he refers to as "the coming of the literary Shiloh of America," he asserts, "is not, and never will be, individually developed in any one man," nor, he adds, "would it, indeed, appear so unreasonable to suppose, that this great fullness and overflowing may be, or may be destined to be, shared by a plurality of men of genius"(HHM, 550). Consequently, John D. Seelye points out, "there is no small irony in the Virginian's declaration that 'However great may be the praise I have bestowed upon him, I feel that in so doing I have served [sic] and honored myself, than him.'"[5] The theory of art he details in the moment of encounter is similarly set forth, not as a personal view of art, but as a revelation of that decisive moment and of the elusive spirit that possesses him. To a great extent, the development of Melville's career is the record of his belief in that intuited vision and in the possibility of communicating it to his reading public.

There seems little doubt that the conception of Melville as a "natural genius" has been sustained by his own repeated professions of the spontaneous nature of his own development and by the impression he imparts of being swept along by a force within him which he does not entirely understand. The intensity and force of that development is readily apparent in what remains of Melville's personal correspondence. Within weeks of completing Mardi, for example, Melville writes to Evert Duyckinck concerning it:

> I am glad you like that affair of mine. But it seems so long now since I wrote it, & my mood has so changed, that I dread to look into it, and have purposely abstained from so doing since I thanked <g> God it was off my hands.--Would that a man could do something & then say--It is finished.--not that one thing only, but all others--that he has reached his uttermost, & can never exceed it. But live & push--tho' we put one leg forward ten miles--its no reason the other must lag behind--no, that must again distance the other--& so we go till we get the cramp & die. (L, 83)

This is not a temporary feeling of Melville's nor is it simply his own offhanded manner of dismissing what he recognized as a flawed work. Melville, in effect, feels himself being swept along by the force of his own inward growth. He similarly dismisses Redburn and White-Jacket, two substantial achievements, both written within a year of the completion of Mardi, dismissals which have, to some extent, contributed to their continued neglect by Melville scholars. Redburn he terms "beggarly." "I hope, he remarks in a letter to Evert Duyckinck, I shall never write such a book again"(L, 95). Concerning both novels he declares: "No reputation that is gratifying to me, can possibly be achieved by either of these books. They are two jobs, which I have done for money--being forced to it, as other men are to sawing wood"(L, 91).

By the time Melville is engaged in writing Moby-Dick, his sense of inward growth has reached a feverish intensity. In response to Hawthorne's laudatory comments concerning that novel, Melville writes:

> Farewell. Don't write a word about the book. That would be robbing me of my miserly delight. I am heartily sorry I ever wrote anything about you--it was paltry. Lord, when shall we be done growing? As long as we have anything more to do, we have done nothing. So, now, let us add Moby Dick to our blessing, and step from that. Leviathan is not the biggest fish;--I have heard of Krakens.
>
> This is a long letter, but you are not at all bound to answer it. Possibly, if you do answer it, and direct it to Herman Melville, you will missend it--for the very fingers that now guide this pen are not precisely the same that just took it up and put it on this paper. Lord, when shall we be done changing? (L, 143)

But, as Melville himself had earlier recognized, such consuming inward growth could not long continue. "My dear Sir," he had written Hawthorne several months earlier, "a presentiment is on me,--I shall at last be worn out and perish, like an old nutmeg-grater, grated to pieces by the constant attrition of the wood, that is, the nutmeg"(L, 128).

In 1856, having written nine books in little more than ten years, Melville left the United States for Egypt and the Holy Land, physically exhausted, mentally depressed, and with only a very limited reading public. In a journal entry dated November 20th, 1856, Hawthorne himself records that during his brief meeting with Melville in Liverpool, immediately prior to the latter's departure for the Holy Land, Melville stated that "he had pretty much made up his mind to be annihilated." But, as Hawthorne himself recognized at the time, ". . . he does not seem to rest in that anticipation; and, I think, will never rest until he gets hold of a definite belief."[6]

If the response to Melville's fiction has been largely a response to a personality, that response stems to a great extent from the intensity and force of Melville's development as it is evident in both his fictional and non-fictional writings; from the qualities of persistence and sincerity that Hawthorne himself so admired in Melville's quest for certitude; and from the apparent honesty with which Melville recorded the progress of that quest. "It is," Warner Berthoff rightly notes, "a main part of our impression of him that we should find him manfully absorbed, at the moment of writing his books, in the activity and astonishing development of his own mind, yet particularly without personal presumption in the matter." And yet, as Berthoff himself points out, "the growth and development that counted for him as a writer . . ." was over by 1853.

> His private trials of spirit were, of course far from finished. His almost disabling obsession with first and last questions was really just beginning. Almost all reports we have both about Melville's endless pursuit of 'everything that lies beyond human ken' (as

> Hawthorne describes it), and about his uncertain health and nervous instability, are from after 1852. . . . Before 1852, however, reports of Melville's manner and behaviour have quite a different emphasis; we hear of his extravagant mimetic energy in telling stories, his power of vividly recreating the actual scenes and characters of his adventures, his way of raising ultimate questions about Truth and Being quite offhandedly, like any topic of common conversation.[7]

This does not mean that the subject of Melville's later prose has no personal bearing. Nevertheless, after Pierre, as Berthoff notes, Melville is "essentially explanatory rather than rhapsodically or prophetically interjective of what he is in the process of discovering."[8]

In the years between Typee and Pierre Melville was involved in the process of discovering his own literary identity and the means of mastering what, in his review of Hawthorne's Mosses, he terms "the great Art of Telling the Truth." By 1850, the year in which he wrote "Hawthorne and his Mosses," Melville had largely discovered the nature of his literary calling and had sufficiently mastered the "great Art of Telling the Truth" to be able to complete Moby-Dick. In reading Hawthorne's fiction and in meeting the man himself, Melville felt that he had at last encountered a contemporary American writer who embraced similar ideas concerning the nature and function of art and who was, in his own fiction, attempting to express ideas not unlike Melville's own. By the time Melville left Liverpool for the Holy Land, he had not only become somewhat estranged from Hawthorne but had largely lost faith in the conception of art that underlies his review of

Hawthorne's Mosses. He no longer possessed his earlier faith that "genius, all over the world stand hand and hand, and one shock of recognition runs the whole circle round"(HHM, 547). Indeed, reading Matthew Arnold's essay on Maurice de Guerin in July of 1869, Melville scored, underscored, and boxed a statement, attributed by Arnold to de Guerin, that "there is more power and beauty . . . in the well-kept secret of one's self and one's thoughts, than in the display of a whole heaven that one may have inside one . . . The literary career seems to me unreal, both in its essence and in the rewards one seeks from it, and therefore fatally marred by a secret absurdity." Concerning this latter remark, Melville wrote: "This is the finest verbal statement of a truth which everyone in these days must have felt."[9]

II From Travel Narrative to Internalized Quest

Although Melville dates his own inward development from 1844, the year in which he began writing Typee, it was not until the writing of Mardi that he rejected the more-or-less autobiographical and factually-oriented form of the travel narrative in an attempt to develop a less constricting form in which to relate his voyages within the world of his own mind. Indeed, within Mardi itself, Melville moves from the literary form of the travel narrative and from the conception of reality it assumes to a literary form not unlike the "creative autobiography" and to an assertion of the infinitude within man himself. Melville himself was very much aware of the radical nature of the shift involved and in his own correspondence suggests that he was, in fact, anxious to begin his career anew. "Unless you should deem it very desirable," Melville stressed in a letter to his English publisher, John Murray, concerning the details of Mardi's impending publication, "do not put me down on the title page as 'the author of Typee & Omoo.' I wish to separate 'Mardi' as much as possible from those books"(L, 76).

Mardi is for Melville largely an experiment. In writing it he attempts to develop not only a literary form in which he can detail the growth of his own mind, but a narrative voice in which he can speak what he feels within him and yet convey to his readers the transcendent nature of his necessarily subjective vision. In Typee and Omoo Melville had, to some extent at least, mastered the technique and the form of the travel narrative. Melville's early experience writing travel narratives and the controversies that resulted from their publication had a marked effect on the development of his ideas concerning the nature of literature. A close examination of these circumstances is essential to an accurate understanding of the development of Melville's views prior to the publication of "Hawthorne and His Mosses."

Although in the years following his return from the Near East in 1857, Melville lived in virtual obscurity and did so partly by his own choice, less than a decade earlier he was a much celebrated author, having published two travel narratives which had been well received in both England and the United States. The public response to his works, however, was not entirely enthusiastic. Although Typee itself was extolled in the New-York Daily Tribune as "a very entertaining and pleasing narrative" and praised for its "freshness and originality" (The Times, London), its "racy and pointed" style and for the "peculiar animation and vivacity" of its scenes, its author was censured for what in its review The Spectator termed "certain sea freedoms," freedoms which The New York Evangelist termed "slurs and flings against missionaries and civilization." Let him, declared The Eclectic Review, "learn the worth taught by the Christian missionary, before he ventures to criticise his motives, or to disparage his work."[10]

Melville's American publisher, Wiley and Putnam, in fact agreed to publish the narrative only after Melville was persuaded to make extensive revisions of the English text, including the removal of all critical commentary regarding both missionary activities in the South Seas and contemporary political events. Although, at the time, Melville explained away these revisions, stating in a letter to his English publisher that "Such passages are altogether foreign to the adventure, & altho' they may possess a temporary interest now, to some, yet so far as the wide & permanent popularity are concerned, their exclusion will certainly be beneficial" (L, 39), he later expressed his unhappiness concerning the revised edition.[11]

Even drastic revisions, however, could not eradicate from Typee the quality in Melville's narrative which made it offensive to no small number of its readers. Typee is, as many of its reviewers recognized, the book of a man who has felt the liberalizing influences of experiences gained through travel.

> The sights that he saw on his voyage to Liverpool and especially during the years in the South Seas did much toward making him question the creeds and principles that Christendom lived by. He showed when he wrote Typee and Omoo that what he had seen had convinced him that some people would have been better off if they had never heard of Jesus Christ. He had learned a great deal about the incompetence and even insincerity of many who professed to guide others to salvation.[12]

The radical cast of Melville's thoughts permeates his writing. That quality Nathaniel Hawthorne recognized in his sensitive and discerning review of Typee in the Salem Advertiser as its author's "freedom of view." The author of Typee has, Hawthorne observed, "that freedom of view--it would be too harsh to call it laxity of principle--which renders him tolerant of codes of morals that may be little in accordance with our own; a spirit proper enough to a young and adventurous sailor, and which makes his book the more wholesome to our staid landsmen."[13]

Not all reviewers of Typee, however, thought the book "wholesome." Given this "freedom of view," a freedom which, as Warner Berthoff recognizes, is also "patently, a freedom of handling,"[14] Melville found himself struggling with the fixed beliefs of his reading public. But, in the controversy surrounding Typee's publication, the unfavorable response given Melville's disparaging comments concerning missionary activities in the South Seas was only part of a larger issue raised, that of the authenticity of the work itself. The American publishing house of Harper and Brothers, to whom Melville first submitted the manuscript, had, in fact, rejected the work because it was felt that "it was impossible that it could be true and therefore was without real value;" this despite the opinion of their reader that "this work if not as good as Robinson Crusoe seemed to me to be not far behind it."[15] Although the manuscript was subsequently accepted by the English publisher, John Murray, as part of his new and inexpensive "Home and Colonial Library," a series specializing in exotic but true travel narratives, Murray accepted Typee with a skepticism that was echoed by the narrative's earliest reviewers.

Alerted by Harper's rejection and Murray's reluctance, Melville wrote a very carefully worded preface to the English edition in an attempt to forestall any question concerning the authenticity of the narrative. He noted that more than three years had elapsed since the occurrence of the events related in the narrative, excused his own lack of attention to dates, and defended his remarks concerning the missionaries. In the closing paragraph he states:

> There are some things related in the narrative which will be sure to appear strange, or perhaps entirely incomprehensible, to the reader; but they cannot appear more so to him than they did to the author at the time. He has stated such matters just as they occurred, and leaves every one to form his own opinion concerning them; trusting that his anxious desire to speak the unvarnished truth will gain for him the confidence of his readers.[16]

The issue nevertheless arose and was much debated, a portent that Melville was never to gain the full confidence of his reading public.

Although the issue was raised by reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic, it was debated more in England than in the United States. While a number of reviewers accepted the narrative as a truthful account, the consensus among the English reviewers seemed to be that it was beyond the competence of a common sailor and therefore could not be true. One incredulous reviewer hinted that "the name of Melville [was the] equivalent to that of Simbad the Sailor" and invited Melville "to dine with [him] on the first of April next: we intend," he declares, "to ask only a small party,--Messrs. Crusoe, Simbad, Gulliver, Munchausen, and perhaps Pillet, Thiers, Kohl, an a few others."[17] Two years after Typee's publication, the question had still not been resolved and Murray was without the documentary evidence he had repeatedly requested from its author. In a letter dated March 25, 1848, Melville responded to the requests by complaining that he was being treated "as from the Land of the Shadows." "Will you still continue, Mr. Murray," he demands despairingly, "to break seals from the Land of Shadows--persisting in carrying on this mysterious correspondence with an imposter shade, that under the fanciful appellation of Herman Melvill still practices upon honest credulity?" Tauntingly, he declares: "Have a care, I pray, lest while thus parleying with a ghost you fall upon some horrible evel, peradventure sell you soul ere you are aware"

(L, 69-70). He concludes the letter, exclaiming in exasperation: "Bless my soul, Sir, will you Britons not credit that an American can be a gentleman, & have read the Waverly Novels, tho every digit may have been in the tar-bucket?--You make miracles out of what are commonplaces to us"(L, 72). If England was doubtful, America was not without her skeptics. The skepticism of his fellow countrymen, in fact, irritated Melville to the extent that, in response to the Morning Courier and New York Enquirer review of April 17, 1846, he himself wrote a brief note published in the Albany Argus of the twenty-first and a longer reply which he sent to Alexander Bradford whose support he requested in an unsuccessful attempt to have that reply published anonymously in the Courier and Enquirer itself.[18] Citing a review of Typee in Chambers's Edinburgh Journal, Melville writes to Bradford: "I could not but feel heartily vexed, that while the intelligent Editors of a publication like that should thus endorse the geniuneness of the narrative--so many numskills on this side of the water should heroically avow their determination not to be 'gulled' by it"(L, 26).

Melville, indeed, repeatedly states that it was the "imputation of being a romancer in disquise" that prompted him to try his hand at a work of fancy. In a letter to Murray announcing his intention of writing "in downright earnest a 'Romance of Polynisian Adventure,'" Melville declares:

> The truth is, Sir, that the reiterated imputation of being a romancer in disquise has at last pricked me into a resolution to show those

> who may take any interest in the matter, that a real romance of mine is no Typee or Omoo, & is made of different stuff altogether. This I confess has been the main inducement in altering my plans--but others have operated. I have long thought that Polynisia furnished a great deal of rich poetical material that has never been employed hitherto in works of fancy; and which to bring out suitable, required only that play of freedom and invention accorded only to the Romancer & poet. (L, 70)

Although, as Melville's own comments suggest, it would be wrong to single out this as the sole cause of his turning to fiction--the letter, in fact, reveals that Melville had a strong predilection to the fanciful anyway--the importance for Melville's later career of the incredulity with which his first book was received by the reading public has yet to be fully recognized. Nor is it sufficient simply to point out, as recent scholars have done, that Typee is not, in fact, literal autobiography.[19] The importance of the controversy to an understanding of Melville's literary career does not rest in whether or not contemporary scholarship conceives of the narrative as factual, but whether Melville himself believed it to be true and, if so, what effect, its reception had upon his subsequent development as a writer.

Although recent Melville scholarship has tended to minimize the importance of the adverse reviews of Typee and to suggest that Melville was more upset about them than he should have been, there is no doubt that Melville himself was very upset. While he could not have thought the book literal autobiography--the preface to the English edition betrays his

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own sensitivity to the fact that he himself consciously falsified the time period--the question that most frequently arose was not whether *Typee* was an accurate account of Melville's experiences in the South Seas, but whether there was any truth in the narrative whatsoever. As to the proper response to this question, Melville himself was without self-doubt. Like Thoreau, who in writing *Walden* similarily altered the facts in favor of the artistic effect, Melville felt that he had given a truthful account of his first-hand experiences. "The fact is," he declares in a letter to Alexander Bradford, "those who do not beleive it are the greatest 'gulls'--full fledged ones too"(L, 26).

The demand for verisimilitude implicit in Harper's rejection of the *Typee* manuscript and in the controversy surrounding the later publication of the work was, in subsequent years, to alienate Melville much more than had the disparaging remarks of some of the book's reviewers. If Melville's experiences in the South Seas taught him a great deal about the incompetence and insincerity of many who professed to guide others to salvation, the controversy surrounding the publication of *Typee* made him realize at a very early stage in his literary development that how much a reader believes and how he interprets what he reads depends, to a great extent, upon the range of that reader's own particular experiences. Melville was, in short, made to realize that the understanding of a text cannot be an objective procedure for it necessarily involves a precomprehension which expresses the way the reader has already understood himself and the world. The reading public's unwillingness to believe what he stated concerning his experiences in the South Seas led him to an early recognition of the difficulties he faced in attempting to discuss questions of a less tangible nature, questions which were potentially no less controversial. Melville first attempts what Berthoff terms a "still broader and more strenuous freedom"[20] in Mardi and, as late as The Confidence-Man is still arguing for the "sea-room" which, in the review of Hawthornne's Mosses, he asserts an author needs "to tell the Truth"(HHM, 544).

The strange occurrences Melville related in Typee and Omoo were, as he asserted in the preface to the English edition of his first narrative, as commonplace to a sailor "as a jacket out at elbows"(T, xiii), and such commonplaces held less interest for him the more he developed. He was being captivated by a port-of-call much more loosely plotted on the charts than the bay of Nukuheva and, as he himself states in his letter to Murray, was "longing to plume [his] pinions for a flight." For his "narrative of facts" he began "to feel an incurable distaste" (L, 70). Like William Blake before him, he came to feel that "That which can be made explicit to the Idiot is not worth my care."[21] "As for the policy of putting forth an acknowledged romance upon the heels of two books of travel . . . That, Sir," declares Melville to Murray in a statement which has a Blakean ring to it, "is a question for which I care little really.--My instinct is to out with the Romance, & let me say that instincts are prophetic and better than acquired wisdom"(L, 71). With that statement Melville announces his decision to forsake not only the world of facts but the establish views of contemporary critics and to do so in favor of his own world of mind.

III The Nature of Melville's Quarrel With His Readers

Whether or not "the imputation of being a romancer in disguise" was, in fact, the sole motive which prompted Melville to try his hand at romance is questionable. Nevertheless, the protracted critical debate concerning the authenticity of Typee had a marked effect on his subsequent development as a writer. The influence of that debate is apparent in Melville's third book, Mardi, and in his later novels: it is also evident in the rapid development, in the year following the publication of Typee and Omoo, of his thought concerning the nature of the artist's relation to his artwork and to his reading public. The early years of Melville's authorship are marked by at least two important features: the rapid development of his view concerning what he most wanted to write and, related to that, his increasing sense of alienation from his reading public. Melville very quickly recognized not only that what he wanted to write would not pay, but that it would not do so because it presupposed a conception of the world radically opposed to that which he increasingly attributed to "staid landsmen." The difference between the world perceived by travellers like himself and that known to "fireside people," a difference made readily apparent to Melville as a result of the controversy concerning the authenticity of Typee, focused Melville's attention upon a question of the amount of faith and disbelief involved in understanding a work like Typee and upon the extent to which an individual's precomprehension of himself and his world necessarily colors his understanding of what he reads.

The rapid development of Melville's views concerning what he most wanted to write and, concomitant to that, his increasing feeling of isolation from his reading public is readily apparent in his correspondence. "What a madness & anguish it is," he wrote to Evert Duyckinck in 1849 concerning the largely unfavorable response Mardi was then receiving, "That an author can never--under no conceivable circumstances --be at all frank with his readers.--Could I, for one, be frank with them--how would they cease their railing--those at least who have railed"(L, 96). Several months earlier, writing to his father-in-law, Lemuel Shaw, concerning both Redburn and White-Jacket, he remarked:

> For Redburn I anticipate no particular reception of any kind. It may be accounted dull.--As for the other book, it will be sure to be attacked in some quarters. But no reputation that is gratifying to me, can possibly be achieved by either of these books. They are two jobs, which I have done for money--being forced to it, as other men are to sawing wood. And while I have felt obliged to refrain from writing the kind of book I would wish to; yet, in writing these two books, I have not repressed myself much--so far as they are concerned; but have spoken pretty much as I feel.--

> Being books, then, written in this way, my only desire for their 'success' (as it is called) springs from my pocket, & not from my heart. So far as I am individually concerned, & independent of my pocket, it is my earnest desire to write those sort of books which are said to 'fail.'--Pardon this egotism. (L, 91-92)

Melville's comments indicate both the growing urgency of his desire to express the vision possessing him and his accompanying impatience with his reading public. Although he was pleasantly surprised by the relatively favorable reviews Redburn received, those reviews served to reinforce rather than change his opinion of his reading public. Favorable as they were, they did not in any way alter his determination to write "those sort of books which are said to 'fail.'"

That the critical debate regarding the authenticity of Typee had a marked effect on Melville's subsequent development as a writer is evident in the preface to Mardi. In that preface Melville states: "Not long ago, having published two narratives of voyages in the Pacific, which, in many quarters, were received with incredulity, the thought occurred to me, of indeed writing a romance of Polynesian adventure, and publishing it as such; to see whether, the fiction might not, possibly, be received for a verity; in some degree the reverse of my previous experience"(M, xvii). "This thought," he states, "was the germ of others, which have resulted in Mardi."

But Melville does not leave the matter there. In a chapter entitled "Faith and Knowledge," the first-person narrator, Taji, takes up the question of credulity and the comments he makes could well have served as an alternative preface to Mardi itself.

> A thing incredible is about to be related; but a thing may be incredible and still be true; sometimes it is incredible because it is true. And many infidels but disbelieve the least incredible things; and many bigots reject the least obvious. (M, 296)

Taji is here prefacing Samoa's tale regarding a native suffering from a severe head injury, whose brain Samoa had successfully replaced with that of a pig. It is a story, Taji remarks, "for the truth of which no one but [Samoa] could vouch, for no one but him was by, at the time; though there is testimony to show that it involves nothing at variance with the customs of certain barbarous tribes." Taji's comments are important not only because the situation he describes parallels, to a certain extent, Melville's own previous experiences, but because the views Taji expresses in the "Faith and Knowledge" chapter anticipate by approximately two years those voiced by Melville himself in his review of Hawthorne's Mosses From An Old Manse.

The "Faith and Knowledge" chapter is offered as Taji's answer to the question of whether or not Samoa's incredible tale should be believed. No empirical evidence, it is pointed out, exists by reference to which Samoa's statements can be verified, nor, as Taji notes, were there any witnesses who could corroborate the native's story. What is more, Samoa told his story as a traveller and "stay-at-homes say travellers lie." "Yet," asserts Taji, "a voyage to Ethiopia would cure them of that; for few skeptics are travellers; fewer travellers liars, though the proverb respecting them lies." Samoa's tale, then, must be accepted on the basis of faith.[22] In the "Faith and Knowledge" chapter Taji argues the basis for such faith.

In that chapter Taji develops his arguments with reference to the Christian problem of faith in God. He distinquishes between those who, like the disciple Thomas, beheld the living Christ and later Christians who must accept the Crucifixion and Resurrection on faith alone. A further distinction is made, however, amongst those in the latter group: Taji distinquishes between those who possess an "easy faith" in Christianity and those who have a lively and immediate understanding of it. Thus, he asserts, "though Milton was a heretic to the creed of Athanasius, his faith exceeded that of Athanasius himself; and the faith of Athanasius that of Thomas, the disciple, who with his own eyes beheld the marks of the nails. Whence it comes that though we are all Christians now, the best of us had perhaps been otherwise in the days of Thomas"(M, 296). What Taji inveighs against are those who blindly and unyieldingly adher to established beliefs, those who close themselves off from new experiences and who, consequently, must forever attempt to defend their abstract, because impersonal, fixed beliefs against "the wide Atlantic" which can rush in through an "opening, but of a hand's breadth." "But let us," he exclaims in mockery, "hold fast to all we have; and stop all leaks in our faith; lest an opening, but of a hand's breadth, should sink our seventyfours"(M, 296).

The problem, Taji suggests, is that individuals are necessarily limited in their understanding by the range of their own previous experiences, the "world" in which they live. Thus, according to "stay-at-homes," travellers are unquestionably liars. If men fail to recognize that the knowledge they possess is necessarily subjective, he implies, it is because they forget that it is the eye that forms the horizon. "Things nearest," he observes, "are farthest off."

> Though your ear be next door to your brain, it is forever removed from your sight. Man has a more comprehensive view of the moon than the man in the moon himself. We know the moon is round; he only infers it. It is because we ourselves are in ourselves, that we know ourselves not. (M, 296-97)

For Taji, as for Emerson, the eye is the first circle.[23] It is only through a recognition of the necessarily subjective nature of one's own experiences, he suggests, that a more encompassing understanding is possible. Implicit in the passage quoted is the correlation of sight with knowledge, a correlation which points to man's own inner blindness and which in Moby-Dick prompts Ahab, in ordering "a complete man after a desirable pattern" to forgo "eyes to see outwards" in favor of "a skylight on the top of his head to illuminate inwards"(MD, 390).

If, in the "Faith and Knowledge" chapter of Mardi, Taji points to the importance of the self in the knowing process, he, at the same time, asserts the identity of all minds so that simultaneous with the activity of self-discovery is the discovery of innate, "universe-old truths." The last paragraph of the "Faith and Knowledge" chapter is, indeed, Taji's assertion of the universality of his own experiences. "In some universe-old truths," he declares, "all mankind are disbelievers."

> Do you believe that you lived three thousand years ago? That you were at the taking of Tyre, were overwhelmed in Gomorrah? No. But for me, I was at the subsiding of the Deluge, and helped swab the ground, and build the first house. With the Israelites, I fainted in the wilderness; was in court when Solomon outdid all the judges before him. I, it was, who suppressed the lost work of Manetho, on the Egyptian theology, as containing mysteries not to be revealed to posterity, and things at war with canonical scriptures; I, who originated the conspiracy against that purple murderer, Domitian; I, who in the senate moved that great and good Aurelian be emperor. I instigated the abdication of Diocletian, and Charles the Fifth; I touched Isabella's heart that she hearkened to Columbus. I am he, that from the king's minions hid the Charter in the old oak at Hartford; I harboured Goffe and Whalley: I am the leader of the Mohawk masks, who in the Old Commonwealth's harbour, overboard threw the East India Company's Souchong; I am the Veiled Persian Prophet; I, the man in the iron mask; I, Junius. (M, 297)

The continuity achieved through Taji's catalogue of events amounts almost to a suspension of time, one illustrative of his assertion elsewhere in Mardi that he is "full with a thousand souls" who ultimately speak with one voice(M, 367). He who speaks through Taji and, as Melville suggests in his review of Hawthorne's Mosses From An Old Manse, through all great authors, remains unidentified. Junius, to whom Melville refers again in "Hawthorne and His Mosses," is, of course, the famous pen name of an eighteenth-century political writer whose own real identity remained a secret during his lifetime despite several concerted attempts to reveal it. It is interesting that, although in the early nineteenth century "Junius" was remembered and mentioned by writers such as Coleridge and Emerson almost solely for the exemplary style of his letters, what intrigued Melville was the masquerade of the man's authorship.[24]

This ubiquitous spirit, this "Junius," who speaks through Taji and from behind the iron mask, bears a close resemblance--in the way he is conceived at least--to the Hebraic God who is removed from and yet invisibly visible in the ongoing events of history; the God whom, when Moses asked His name replied, "I am he who is," or, to give a more literal translation of the Hebraic, "I shall be there as who I am shall I be there."[25] Like that God, this "Junius" is revealed in the ongoing events of history, events in which, like the Hebraic God, he is invisibly visible. Like that God too, he speaks from behind the "veil."

As M.H. Abrams notes, it was Friedrich Schlegel who first saw in the analogy between God's creation of the world and the artist's making of a poem "the intellectual model for conceiving a poem as a disguised projection of its author."[26] In the closing paragraph of the "Faith and Knowledge" chapter, the narrator of Mardi suggests that the novel is a revelation, not of the personality of its narrator, but of the infinite within, that is, of the impersonal, universal truths innate in the narrator and, by implication, in every man. According to Nathalia Wright, this paragraph is "as near as [Melville] came to surrender of the ego, implying as he did that the world is ceaselessly becoming, that some *élan vital* is at work recreating every moment anew."[27] While this may be the earliest affirmation in Melville's fiction of the existence of such an *élan vital*, it is not the only affirmation Melville makes, nor is it uncharacteristic of his thought as a whole.

In his belief in the existence of this world within, Nathalia Wright points out, "Melville has often been called, and even called himself Platonic." "Like the Platonist," she notes, "he did believe truth resided in the unseen world of ideas and conceptions rather than in the world of material manifestations" but, she rightly concludes, "in his essentially romantic conception of this invisible sphere he was closer to the Hebrews than to the Greeks. Order, rhetoric, and logic did not represent the primal truth to him as did elemental and undisciplined energy."

> For the Greeks there was clarity not only in this world but also in the world of Gods and ghosts. The gods had a fixed abode, disembodied spirits followed a well-marked course, and converse with both was held naturally and reasonable. In all their mythology there is no touch of fearful novelty. But to the Hebrews this world was vague: except for Jehovah there was no personal identification among spirits, and He had no dwelling place but nature; there was no heaven or hell. And because it was vague it could be very dreadful to them. Whereas the Greeks could watch supernatural beings move among them, influencing their affairs, to the Hebrews such interference was utterly mysterious. It was a blow out of the dark, sudden and unexplained. The unseen world had reached out and smitten

> the world of sense, writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast, turning back the waters of the Red Sea, transforming Lot's wife into a pillar of salt.[28]

Like other Romantic writers, Melville internalized this infinite, unseen world within man himself. From Mardi to Pierre Melville's writing is increasingly marked by his growing awareness of the strangeness and terror of the virtually unexplored regions of the individual consciousness and of what Carl Jung was later to term the "collective unconscious."

The views set forth in the "Faith and Knowledge" chapter concerning the existence of this world within are not entirely new. What is particularly important about the appearance of these ideas in Mardi itself is their application to the problem of literary belief raised both in the preface to the book and in the comments with which Taji prefaces Samoa's incredible tale. An implication of the views set forth in the "Faith and Knowledge" chapter is that, on the basis of this shared, inner world-soul, an intuitive understanding between men is possible. The reader of Samoa's tale, Taji implies, should be able to perceive the "Truth" inherent in Samoa's thoughts, the spirit in which they are presented, as well as read the outer form of the written statements. For, Taji suggests, there exists within men the Truth they fail to recognize in others; they fail to recognize it in others because they do not recognize it in themselves.

Taji, however, merely suggests the views which Melville himself later develops more fully in his review of Hawthorne's Mosses From An Old Manse. My object in examining the "Faith and Knowledge" chapter of Mardi is not to suggest an identification of Melville with Taji: it is, rather, to demonstrate how early in his career Melville began both exploring the possibility that how a reader understands what he reads depends largely on his precomprehension of himself and his world and asserting the existence of an infinite spirit within the self which enables the writer to transcend subjectivity, and how Melville's ideas arise, in part, out of his reaction to the controversy surrounding the publication of his earliest works.

IV Hawthorne and "the Great Art of Telling the Truth"

Although prior to writing "Hawthorne and His Mosses" Melville had already begun to explore the "world of mind" and to develop a suitable form in which to embody those explorations, reading Mosses From An Old Manse and meeting Hawthorne himself was a decisive event in Melville's development as a writer. In his review Melville indicates that, in reading Hawthorne's book, he experienced what, to borrow an expression from the review itself, can only be described as a "shock of recognition," an immediate, personal experience of the ultimate identity of all great minds in what, in the review itself, is described as "the mystical ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty, which ubiquitously possesses men of genius"(HHM, 536). Nor did Melville's impression of Hawthorne as "a man of deep and noble nature" noticeably alter in the early years of their close personal friendship, years they spent as neighbours in the Berkshires. In those early years Melville was strongly attracted to "this most excellent man of Mosses," an attraction that, despite their later estrangement, survived and found expression in "Monody," a poem occasioned by Hawthorne's death and inscribed by Melville in his own copy of Hawthorne's last book, Our Old Home. "To have known him, to have loved him/ After loneness long," Melville writes in that poem, "And neither in the wrong;/ And now for death to set his seal--/ Ease me, a little ease, my song!"[29]

The intensity of Melville's love for Hawthorne in the early 1850's is evident in almost everything Melville writes concerning their relationship. His comments reveal, moreover, that the intense, mystical feeling of identity with Hawthorne recorded in "Hawthorne and His Mosses" was not simply a passing feeling. More than a year after the initial encounter, he writes to Hawthorne of the "pantheistic" feeling he experienced in reading the former's discerning comments concerning the newly published Moby-Dick. "Your heart," he states, "beat in my ribs and mine in yours, and both in God's."

> Whence come you, Hawthorne? By what right do you drink from my flagon of life? And when I put it to my lips--lo, they are yours and not mine. I feel that the Godhead is broken up like the bread at the Supper, and that we are the pieces. Hence this infinite fraternity of feeling. (L, 142)

Both the exuberant mood of the letter and the extravagant language Melville uses to express himself suggest the intensity of the feeling he has experienced. The "sense of unspeakable security" Melville states he felt as a consequence of Hawthorne's having understood Moby-Dick seems generally to characterize the effect of their relationship on the much younger Melville. "Knowing you," he writes Hawthorne in the same letter, "persuades me more than the Bible of our immortality"(L, 143). Concluding that letter he remarks: "The divine magnet is on you, and my magnet responds. Which is the biggest? A foolish question--they are One"(L, 144).

To stress the importance of these experiences to an understanding of Melville's development as a writer is not--as Melville himself disparagingly observed with regard to the "Live in the all" philosophy, a philosophy he associates with Goethe--to "insist" upon the universal application of a temporary feeling or opinion"(L, 131), for the experiences were "shocks of recognition" to Melville precisely because they were spontaneous, all-consuming in the moment of encounter, but no sooner experienced than gone. "In me," Melville observes "divine maganimities are spontaneous and instantaneous --catch them while you can. The world goes round, and the other side comes up"(L, 142). Melville remains as unflinchingly honest about the elusive and transitory nature of the experience itself as he is rhapsodic in his description of it.

If reading Hawthorne's Mosses From An Old Manse and meeting the man himself gave Melville an immediate personal experience of the reality of this ubiquitous and yet ever-elusive "Spirit" he celebrates in the review, they also provided him with the objective basis for his necessarily subjective art. Melville's comments concerning Mosses From An

Old Manse indicate that he regards the book less as a revelation of the personality of its author than of the infinite within that author. Thus, at the outset of the review, the Virginian declares that he does not know "what would be the right name to put on the title page of an excellent book" since, he asserts, "the names of all fine authors are fictitious ones . . . simply standing, as they do, for the mystical, ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty, which ubiquitously possesses men of genius." Would, he exclaims, "we could glorify [excellent books], without including their ostensible authors"(HHM, 536). Elevating the "Spirit" itself above the men in whom "by cunning glimpses she reveals herself," Melville celebrates, not Hawthorne's genius per se, but that genius as part of the universal genius which "all over the world, stands hand in hand"(HHM, 547). Throughout "Hawthorne and His Mosses" the Virginian is concerned less with the "ostensible author" than with the infinite Spirit revealed in and through him. Underlying the review is Melville's confidence that if a man dives deeply enough and persistently enough within himself, he will ultimately discover, at the most profound level of his being, not simply the nature of his own identity but the germinal cause of life itself, the "ungraspable phantom of life" which, in Moby-Dick, Ishmael asserts is "the key to it all." Melville's review of Hawthorne's Mosses is his assertion of that belief and his celebration of Hawthorne's deep-diving genius, a celebration of "the whole corps of thought-divers"(L, 79) and of the elusive phantom after which they dive.

As John D. Seelye recognizes, underlying the movement of that review is the pattern of the quest, a pattern which, he notes, dominates not only Melville's novels but a great many of Melville's shorter works as well.[30] The internalization of the quest is signalled in the opening lines of the review wherein the Virginian quotes from Hawthorne's "The Artist of the Beautiful."

> Would that all excellent books were foundlings, without father or mother, that so it might be, we could glorify them, without including their ostensible authors. Nor would any true man take exception to this;--least of all, he who writes,--'When the Artist rises high enough to achieve the Beautiful, the symbol by which he makes it perceptible to mortal senses becomes of little value in his eyes, while his spirit possesses itself in the enjoyment of the reality.' (HHM, 536)

The Virginian imagines Hawthorne's artist internalizing the reality which, in the symbol of the butterfly, he makes "perceptible to mortal senses." Throughout "Hawthorne and His Mosses" the Virginian himself elevates the internalized reality above the external means by which it is communicated and, like the narrator of Hawthorne's tales, conceives the symbol to be "of little value" in relation to the reality the artist possesses within himself. Thus, although he speaks of the "Intelligence Office" as a "wonderous symbolizing of the secret workings in men's souls"(HHM, 540), he is ultimately concerned less with the story as story than as one of various "clews whereby we enter a little way into the intricate, profound heart where they originate"(HHM, 539). The review charts the progress of this interior journey and describes the awe-inspiring inner landscape.

In elaborating upon his earlier comments concerning Hawthorne's "The Artist of the Beautiful," the Virginian makes reference to "Junius."

> But more than this. I know not what would be the right name to put on the title-page of an excellent book, but this I feel, that the names of all fine authors are fictitious ones, far more so than that of Junius,--simply standing, as they do, for the mystical, ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty, which ubiquitously possesses men of genius. Purely imaginative as this fancy may appear, it nevertheless seems to receive some warranty from the fact, that on a personal interview no great author has ever come up to the idea of his reader. But that dust of which our bodies are composed, how can it fitly express the nobler intelligences among us? With reverence be it spoken, that not even in the case of one deemed more than man, not even in our Saviour, did his visible frame betoken anything of the augustness of the nature within. Else, how could those Jewish eyewitnesses fail to see heaven in his glance. (HHM, 536)

The Virginian is fascinated by the discrepancy between the objective appearance and the subjective reality, a discrepancy which, in a literary context, manifests itself as a contrast between the "visible frame" of the ostensible artist and the infinite Spirit acting within him, a contrast which similarly exists between the letter of the written statement and the "Spirit" informing it.

Throughout the review, Melville is concerned with this discrepancy between subjective appearance and objective reality. In the opening pages of "Hawthorne and His Mosses," the problem it poses is defined in terms of the relative value as a guidebook to "A Virginian Spending July in Vermont" of Dwight's Travels in New England and Hawthorne's Mosses From

An Old Manse. Whereas Dwight promises the traveller in New England a factual introduction to the natural landscape of the region, Hawthorne offers him a fictional exploration of the human world informing that landscape. As Edgar Dryden points out, "The narrator's farewell to Dwight and his acceptance of Hawthorne's Mosses marks his entrance into another world."

> A glance at the index of the first volume of Dwight's Travels reveals a complete if somewhat dull guidebook to New England. The book, which includes everything from a description of the climate to a discussion of the morals of Indian tribes, attempts, in Dwight's words, 'to describe New England in a manner resembling that in which a painter would depict a cloud.' The Virginian tourist, visiting in New England, loses interest in Dwight's factual description of the actual landscape, accepts Hawthorne as his guide and is magically transported into the 'enchanting landscape' of Hawthorne's fictional world. As his actions imply, the narrator finds Hawthorne's landscape more appealing and meaningful than Dwight's descriptions of the actual one.[31]

The Virginian's rejection of the factual travel guide in favour of the world of Hawthorne's fiction, in effect, parallels Melville's own rejection of the travel narrative in favour of the internalized quest. His choice of Hawthorne's fiction over Dwight's travel narrative reflects Melville's own concern, not with outward appearances, but with the reality those appearances conceal. Hawthorne's fiction promises to introduce the reader to aspects of the New England world left unexplored in Dwight's Travels in New England.

The conception of fiction as a revelation of the "mystical ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty," a conception which elevates the subjective reality above the objective means by which it is made "perceptible to mortal senses," closely resembles the views Melville expresses in his own personal correspondence. In his letter to Hawthorne thanking him for his laudatory comments about Moby-Dick, Melville writes:

> You did not care a penny for the book. But, now and then as you read, you understood the pervading thought that impelled the book--and that you praised. Was it not so? You were archangel enough to despise the imperfect body, and embrace the soul. Once you hugged the ugly Socrates because you saw the flame in the mouth, and heard the rushing of the demon,--the familiar,--and recognized the sound; for you have heard it in your own solitudes. (L, 142)

What Melville views as important is not the "imperfect body" of Moby-Dick--Ishmael himself tells us "this whole book is a draught--nay, the draught of a draught" (MD, 128)--but the Spirit it embodies. Melville pictures Hawthorne despising that "imperfect body" while, at the same time, embracing the Spirit inherent in it, a Spirit Hawthorne is said to have experienced in his own solitudes.

What characterizes both Melville's review of Mosses From An Old Manse and the views he expresses in his other non-fictional writings, is a concern, not with the outer form of written statements, but with the experience underlying those statements, a concern characteristic of Romantic art generally. Indeed, in "Hawthorne and His Mosses" Melville argues that an understanding of Hawthorne's fiction or that of any of the other "masters of the great Art of Telling the Truth," can be achieved only by those who can penetrate beyond the written statements themselves to the experiences they record, who can, in effect, enter into the experiences related. An understanding of Hawthorne's fiction cannot, he asserts, be achieved simply through an objective analysis of the written word. "It is not the brain that can test such a man," the Virginian asserts, "it is only the heart. You cannot come to know greatness by inspecting it; there is no glimpse to be caught of it, except by intuition: you need not ring it, you but touch it, and you find it gold"(HHM, 541).

What the review advances is a subjective, intuitive hermeneutic. To understand the Truth as it is revealed in Hawthorne's fiction, the reader must possess the ability to enter into the spiritual life of the writer. If he is going to catch "those occasional flashings-forth of the intuitive Truth" in Hawthorne's fiction, he must, Melville suggests, penetrate beyond the letter of the written statement to "the very axis of reality" which the artist himself has probed. To do so, the reader must, like the author himself, be a seeker--"not a finder yet"--of the ubiquitous Spirit made momentarily perceptible in the fiction. Thus, states the Virginian concerning Shakespeare, "if few men have time, or patience, or palate, for the spiritual truth as it is in that great genius;--it is, then no matter of surprise that in a contemporaneous age, Nathaniel Hawthorne is a man, as yet, almost utterly mistaken among men"(HHM, 542).

If the truth eludes most of Hawthorne's readers, Melville suggests, it is not simply because so very few have the "time, or patience or palate" to pursue it, but also because the world as a whole has set its face against it. "In this world of lies," the Virginian laments

> Truth is forced to fly like a scared white doe in the woodlands; and only by cunning glimpses will she reveal herself, as in Shakespeare and other masters of the great Art of Telling the Truth,--even if it be covertly, and by snatches.
> (HHM, 542)

Thus, although the review celebrates Shakespeare for "those deep far-away things in him; those short, quick probings at the very axis of reality," it celebrates him less for what he did say than for what he was forced to leave unsaid. "If I magnify Shakespeare," the Virginian observes, "it is not so much for what he did do, as for what he did not do, or refrained from doing"(HHM, 542). In a world set against the Truth, he suggests, a writer intent upon speaking that Truth must, like Shakespeare, craftily state or insinuate it through the mouths of his fictional characters.

The Virginian's vision of a world hostile to the Truth is one repeatedly expressed by Melville in his own personal correspondence. "Try to get a living by the Truth," Melville asserts in a letter to Hawthorne, "and go to the Soup Societies. Heaven! Let any clergyman try to preach the Truth from its very stronghold, the pulpit, and they would ride him out of his church on his own pulpit bannister"(L, 127). "Though I wrote the Gospels in this century," he declares, "I should die in the gutter"(L, 129). Although, in his letter to Hawthorne, Melville extols Solomon as "the truest man who ever spoke," he nonetheless ventures the opinion that Solomon "a little managed the truth with a view to popular conservatism; or else there have been many corruptions and interpolations of the text"(L, 130). Melville expresses a similar view regarding Shakespeare's plays. Writing to Evert Duyckinck of "the muzzle" which, he asserts, "all men wore on their souls in the Elizabethan day," Melville states, "that even Shakespeare was not a frank man to the uttermost." "And indeed, he asks, "who in this intolerant Universe is, or can be?" Although he concedes that "the Declaration of Independence makes a difference"(L, 80), he views the world as intolerant still.

Thus, for Melville, the dichotomy between objective appearance and subjective reality, a dichotomy which, in literature, manifests itself as a discrepancy between the letter and the Spirit, is further complicated by the need for stylistic indirection. "What a madness & anguish it is," he declares in a letter to Evert Duyckinck, "that an author can never--under no conceivable circumstances--be at all frank with his readers. Could I, for one, be frank with them--how would they cease their railing--those at least who have railed"(L, 96). Like Shakespeare, the Virginian suggests, the modern author must "craftily say or sometimes insinuate the things, which [he] feel[s] to be so terrifically true, that it were all but madness for any good man in his own proper character, to utter, or even hint of them"(HHM, 541-42).

Melville's assertion of an intuitive hermeneutic and his classification of readers as either "deep divers" or "superficial skimmers of pages" assumes what M.H. Abrams terms a "bi-directional," subjective-objective frame of reference to the written statement. Whereas "the superficial skimmer of pages" is content to remain upon the surface and to read the literal level of the author's thoughts, the "deep diver" attempts to penetrate beyond those surfaces to what in, Moby-Dick, Ahab terms "the little lower layer." In his review of Mosses From An Old Manse Melville celebrates Hawthorne himself as a "deep diver" and suggests that Hawthorne's fiction can be read on at least two levels. Those content with surface meanings will, he suggests, deem Hawthorne "a pleasant writer, with a pleasant style,--a sequestered, harmless man, from whom any deep and weighty thing would hardly be anticipated:--a man who means no meanings." More discerning readers, on the other hand, will rank him along with Shakespeare "as the profoundest of thinkers." Not all readers will discern this lower level of meaning, Melville remarks, "for it is mostly insinuated to those who may best understand it, and account for it; it is not obtruded upon every one alike"(HHM, 543).

In the concluding pages of "Hawthorne and His Mosses," Melville suggests that Hawthorne uses stylistic indirection in order to perpetuate the popular conception of himself as a man "who means no meanings:"

> The truth seems to be, that like many other geniuses, this Man of Mosses takes great delight in hoodwinking the world,--at least, with respect to himself. Personally, I doubt not, that he rather prefers to be generally esteemed but a so-so sort of author; being willing to

> reserve the thorough and acute appreciation of what he is, to that party most qualified to judge--that is, to himself. Besides, at the bottom of their natures, men like Hawthorne, in many things, deem the plaudits of the public such strong presumptive evidence of mediocrity in the object of them, that it would in some degree render them doubtful of their own powers, did they hear much and vociferous braying concerning them in the public pastures.... . But with whatever motive, playful or profound, Nathaniel Hawthorne has chosen to entitle his pieces in the manner he has, it is certain, that some of them are directly calculated to deceive--egregiously deceive--the superficial skimmer of pages. (HHM, 548-549)

Those who argue that in reviewing Hawthorne's fiction Melville unintentionally tells his readers more about himself and his own conception of art than about Hawthorne or Mosses From An Old Manse regard these statements as Melville's admission of the duplicity of his own authorship.[32] But what the Virginian states is not simply that Hawthorne "takes great delight in hoodwinking the world," but that he does so "at least, with respect to himself." To some extent, Melville's comments parallel Hawthorne's own remark, in the preface to Mosses From An Old Manse, that "so far as I am a man of distinctly individual attributes, I veil my face." Underlying the remarks of both men is the assumption of a direct correlation between art and personality. However, like Hawthorne, Melville differentiates between those aspects of this personality which a writer projects into his work and those he conceals from his readers: for Melville, as for Hawthorne, there is always an "inmost Me" behind the fictive mask.

Admittedly, Melville does suggest that Hawthorne projects into Mosses From An Old Manse a deceptive image of himself, one of "a sequestered, harmless man, from whom any deep and weighty thing would hardly be anticipated." Like other "masters of the great Art of Telling the Truth," he is pictured as "managing" the Truth, perhaps (as Melville says of Solomon) with a view to "popular conservatism." However, if Hawthorne's tales are "directly calculated to deceive anyone, it is only the "superficial skimmer of pages." Melville's review is, in itself, an assertion that the "deep diver" will find great depths of thought in Hawthorne's fiction. Although, in "Hawthorne and His Mosses," Melville suggests that each man is potentially a "deep diver"--"There are," the Virginian states, "minds that have gone as far as Shakespeare into the universe. And hardly a mortal man, who, at some time or other, has not felt as great thoughts in him as any you will find in Hamlet"(HHM, 543)--his remarks indicate that, like Hawthorne, he believes that when an author publishes a work he addresses, "not the many who will fling aside his volume, or never take it up, but the few who will understand him, better than most of his schoolmates and lifemates."[36] In his review, Melville speaks not simply as one who has read and appreciated Mosses From An Old Manse, but as one who, like Hawthorne, has probed to "the very axis of reality." In "Hawthorne and His Mosses," he embraces Hawthorne as a fellow quester, one of what he elsewhere terms "the whole corps of thought-divers, that have been diving & coming up again with bloodshot eyes since the world began"

(L, 79), and celebrates the fiction itself as a revelation of "the mystical, ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty, which," he asserts, "ubiquitously possesses men of genius."

V Conclusion

Students of American literature have long recognized that a relationship of some sort exists between the thought and literature of the writers of the American Renaissance and that of the English and European Romantics. In the case of Melville, however, that recognition has tended to be offset by the view that Melville's fiction in some sense represents a reaction to the Transcendentalism of his contemporaries, particularly of Emerson. But what is central to Melville's thought in the early years of his literary development is not his alleged anti-Transcendentalism but his own overwhelming experience of consuming inward growth. Melville's rapid inward unfolding in the years between Typee and Pierre gave him what Warner Berthoff terms "an intense and yet objective personal experience" of the major theme of Romantic thought and literature. That inward growth not only persuaded Melville of the existence of an elan vital, of what Wordsworth, for example, describes as "a motion and a spirit, that impels/ All thinking things, all objects of all thought,/ And rolls through all things,"[34] but led him to think of change as more real than permanence and of "existence, in its fulness and its flow, [as] asymmetrical and intuitive."[35] From Mardi to

Pierre Melville's most ambitious fiction is shaped by his attempt to grasp the reality of that élan vital in language and, thus, to make it perceptible to his readers.

Melville's own adventures in the South Seas and his subsequent image of himself as one who has been "before the mast" perhaps results in his stressing more than other Romantics the primacy of experience over thought, the view that "the imaginative apprehension gained through immediate experience is primary and certain, whereas the analytical reflection that follows is secondary and problematical."[36] Nevertheless, Melville's insistence upon the disequilibrium between experience and idea is characteristic of Romantic thought generally. Melville's characteristic attitude is perhaps best evident in his comments to Hawthorne regarding the transcendental experience. "In reading some of Goethe's sayings so worshipped by his votaries," Melville remarks,

> I came across this, 'Live in the all.' That is to say, your separate identity is but a wretched one,--good; but get out of yourself, spread and expand yourself, and bring to yourself the tinglings of life that are felt in the flowers and the woods, that are felt in the planets Saturn and Venus, and the Fixed Stars. What nonsense! Here is a fellow with a raging toothache. 'My dear boy,' Goethe says to him, 'you must live in the all, and then you will be happy!' (L, 131)

The views Melville expresses do not normally go unqualified nor is this an exception. In a characteristic afterthought he states:

> N.B. This 'all' feeling, though, there is some truth in. You must often have felt it, lying on the grass on a warm summer's day. Your legs seem to send out shoots into the earth. Your hair feels like leaves

> upon your head. This is the all feeling. But what plays the mischief with the truth is that men will insist upon the universal application of a temporary feeling or opinion. (L, 131)

Although Melville is highly critical of "Live in the all!" as an imperative injunction, he nonetheless affirms the truth of the "all" experience itself. For Melville, however, the experience is fleeting; all-consuming in the moment of encounter but no sooner experienced than gone. Nor is this a view which significantly differentiates Melville from other Romantics, almost all of whom lamented the transitory nature of what Melville terms the "all" experience.

For Melville, as for the other Romantics, literature makes its statement not as an idea but as an experience. Melville's own experiences in the South Seas and the incredulity with which his account of those experiences was received led him to an early recognition of the subjective nature of experience and to the realization that how a reader understands what he reads depends largely upon his own pre-comprehension of himself and the world. The conception of literature Melville develops in the years from Typee to Pierre, the conception that a literary work is less a revelation of the personality of its author than of the infinite Spirit acting in and through him, reflects his acute self-consciousness regarding the subjective origins of his fiction. At the same time, however, that conception is indicative of Melville's confidence in the writer's ability to overcome subjectivity and achieve objectivity.

Nevertheless, like many of the Romantics, Melville asserts that only those readers will understand "the great Art of Telling the Truth" who possess the ability to penetrate beyond the objective form of the written statement to the subjective reality informing it. Certainly Melville's classification of readers as either "deep divers" or "superficial skimmers of pages" answers to the Romantic assumption of a bi-directional, subjective-objective frame of reference to the written word. The controversy surrounding the publication of Typee and Omoo and the adverse critical reaction to Mardi, Melville's first attempt to express the vision possessing him, made him, perhaps more than any other Romantic writer, acutely conscious of self as an object in the eyes of the reader. Melville, in fact, recognized that he faced an indifferent, if not hostile, reading public. Intent upon speaking the "Truth" in "this world of lies," Melville neither acceded to nor ignored the fixed beliefs of his readers. For Melville, "the great Art of Telling the Truth" is the art of grasping in a finite, objective form a Truth experienced subjectively as infinite and ever-elusive and of doing so in a manner directly calculated to make it palatable to the reading public. The increasing audience-awareness that the first-person narrators of Melville's fiction from Mardi to Pierre evince is a reflection both of their author's attempt to encourage and cajole his readers and of his growing sense of the limiting effect those readers have on his role as a serious author.[37]

CHAPTER FOUR

MOBY-DICK AND SUBJECTIVITY

Melville's subjectivity has as its basis not an acute preoccupation with self, but the attempt to escape from personality through the discovery of an objective basis for certitude within the self. Underlying the development of Melville's career from *Mardi* to *Pierre* is his belief that if a man dives deeply enough within himself, what he will ultimately discover, at the most profound level of his being, is not simply the nature of his own identity, but the germinal causes of life itself, what, in *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael terms "the ungraspable phantom of life," and "the key to it all." In his review of *Mosses From An Old Manse* Melville celebrates Hawthorne as a "deep diver," but what particularly "fixes and fascinates him" about Hawthorne's work is its concern with the darker regions of the human soul. For Melville, the descent within the self is necessarily a descent into these darker regions, and the Truth revealed in such a descent, a Truth unacknowledged in "this world of lies." Consequently, he suggests, the writer intent upon speaking the Truth within must, like Shakespeare, do so covertly and by snatches.

Melville first attempted to embody the internalized quest in fictional form in his third novel, *Mardi*. That the attempt was largely unsuccessful Melville himself recognized. *Mardi*'s failure did not, however, deter him from making a second attempt. On the contrary, the experience of writing a "Romance of Polynesian Adventure" appears to have confirmed Melville in his desire to explore "the world of mind," a world wherein, Taji observes, "the wanderer may gaze round, with more of wonder than Balboa's band roving through the golden Aztec glades"(M, 557). It is Melville's determination to explore the world within and his willingness "to write those sort of books which are said to 'fail'"(L, 92), which accounts, in part, for the fact that, almost immediately upon writing both Redburn and White-Jacket, Melville dismisses them as "two jobs, which I have done for money--being forced to it, as other men are to sawing wood"(L, 97). Although, in undertaking to write Moby-Dick shortly after his return from England in 1850, Melville may have set out to complete yet another "job," his first-person narrator was, like Taji before him, soon blown by a "blast resistless"(M, 556). The original subject of the tale, the Southern Sperm Whale Fisheries, became only the factual basis of Melville's second attempt to embody the internalized quest in fictional form.

I Grasping the "Ungraspable Phantom of Life"

Melville's concern with subjectivity is evident from the outset of Moby-Dick. If, as Robert Zoellner points out, every page of the novel is "shaped by the idea of water-as-mirror," that idea is established in its first chapter.[1] In that chapter Ishmael introduces Narcissus as a figure for the self divided into observer and observed. He does so in an attempt to explain his own fascination for "the watery parts of the world." Implicit in the deeper meaning Ishmael discovers in "that story of Narcissus" is, Robert Zoellner notes, the assertion that "for Ishmael the voyage of the Pequod is as much a voyage into the interiorities of his own soul as it is a voyage into the exteriorities of the ocean-world."[2] Ishmael implies, moreover, that the voyage within is one in which all men are, to some extent, involved. "If they but knew it," he argues, "almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me"(MD, 12). The "tormenting, mild image" Narcissus sees in the fountain is, Ishmael asserts, "that same image we ourselves see in all rivers and oceans. It is the image of the ungraspable phantom of life; and this is the key to it all"(MD, 14).

The most concise statement of Melville's concern with subjectivity occurs in "The Doubloon" chapter of the novel. In that chapter seven members of the ship's crew, including Ahab, attempt to decipher the meaning of the various signs stamped on the gold doubloon. Their radically different interpretations appear to indicate the truth of Ahab's observation that "this round gold is but the image of the rounder globe, which, like a magician's glass, to each and every man in turn but mirrors back his own mysterious self"(MD, 359). The interpretations differ widely because each member of the ship's crew necessarily interprets the doubloon within the range of his own experiences; each brings to the interpretive act his own precomprehension of himself and the world. Thus, whereas Ahab discovers "stout stuff for woe to work on," Flask sees only "a round thing made of gold . . . worth sixteen dollars [which] at two cents the cigar, [is] nine hundred and sixty cigars"(MD, 360, 361). After listening to the old Manxman's comments Stubb exclaims: "There's another rendering now; but still one text. All sorts of men in one kind of world, you see"(MD, 362). Like Ishmael's reinterpretation of the Narcissus legend, Ahab's comment, in effect, identifies the "mysterious self" as the most critical, because the least known, element in the knowing process. The knower is, indeed, identified as a conditioning factor of all that can be known.[3] "I look," chants Pip, "you look, he looks; we look, ye look, they look"(MD, 362).

"The Doubloon" chapter is an epitome of Moby-Dick as a whole.[4] The various crew member's efforts to interpret the meaning of the doubloon parallels the attempts, in the larger context of the novel, to arrive at some understanding of the White Whale. Each of the major characters in Moby-Dick embodies a different approach to life, a distinctive way of being-in-this-world, and in the comments he makes, reveals not only a doubloon uniquely his own, but a "whale" no less unique. In the "Moby-Dick" chapter of the novel Ishmael briefly summarizes the ways of being-in-the-world exemplified by each of the mates:

> Here, then, was this grey-headed, ungodly old man, chasing with curses a Job's whale round the world, at the head of a crew, too, chiefly made up of mongrel renegades, and castaways, and cannibals--morally enfeebled also, by the incompetence of mere unaided virtue or right-mindedness in Starbuck, the invulnerable jollity of indifference and recklessness in Stubb, and the pervading mediocrity in Flask.
> (MD, 162)

Although Ishmael professes his inability to fathom "how it was that [the crew] so aboundingly responded to [Ahab's] ire" or "what the White Whale was to them, or how to their unconscious understandings, also, in some dim, unsuspected way, he might have seemed the gliding great demon of the seas of life"(MD, 162), Moby-Dick as a whole is an extended exploration of different ways of being-in-the-world, different "unconscious understandings" of "the gliding great demon of seas of life" and how those unconscious understandings color the world each of the characters perceive.

Although, in Moby-Dick, Melville identifies the "mysterious self" as the key component in the knowing process, his primary concern is the possibility of escaping subjectivity through the discovery of a significant relationship between the subjective and objective worlds. That relationship, Melville, like other Romantics, seeks to discover within the self. Narcissus' attempt to grasp "the tormenting, mild image" he sees reflected on the fact of the water actually defines the central action of the novel. According to Robert Zoellner,

> The pallidly beautiful image which Narcissus sees

> glimmering beneath the fountain's surface resembles himself because it is a product of the illuminating *lamp-mind* which, in the act of perception, stamps the world with the features of the unique self. By the same token, the noumenal *me* which peers back at Narcissus out of the watery *not-me* stands as the aboriginal *primal form*, the anteperceptual substrate for all the other primal forms which loom and glide through *Moby-Dick*. Similarly, the *reflective transparency* of Narcissus' fountain parallels the intuitive transparency of Ishmael's ocean, and the dive of Narcissus provides the model for Ishmael as *thought-diver*.[5]

However, whereas Narcissus fails to recognize that the tormenting, mild image he sees glimmering beneath the fountain's surface is a reflection of his own inner self, the Ishmael who narrates *Moby-Dick*, that is, the Ishmael who has dived and surfaced again, is very much aware of that fact. Consequently, it is within the "mysterious self" that he ultimately seeks life's ungraspable phantom.

For Ahab the White Whale is the "ungraspable phantom of life," a phantom he dimly discerns beneath life's surface. His quest for Moby Dick is an attempt to grasp that elusive phantom. Thus, in response to Starbuck's objection that he simply seeks "Vengeance on a dumb brute" that struck him "from blindest instinct," Ahab speaks of "the little lower layer:"

> All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event--in the living act, the undoubted deed--there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough, He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength, with

> an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him. (MD, 144)

Surface appearances have little meaning for Ahab: he is intent upon the reality he perceives underlying them, the "inscrutable thing" which "puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask" of visible objects. Although Ahab is uncertain whether Moby Dick is agent or principal, he seizes upon the whale as the visible embodiment of a power which is otherwise ungraspable, a power he regards as either malicious or indifferently destructive. "he piled upon the white whale's hump," states Ishmael, "the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam down; and then, as if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his hot heart's shell upon it"(MD, 160)[6]

Ahab's whaling quest is paralleled by Ishmael's self-conscious attempt, as narrator, to grasp life's ungraspable phantom in art. For Ishmael, as for Ahab, the White Whale _is_ the visible embodiment of that phantom. At its most elemental level, Ishmael's narrative attempt to grasp the image of that phantom takes the form of an encyclopedic study of the whale. As J.A. Ward notes, Ishmael's study of the whale is "a search for total knowledge:" it is "an attempt to achieve all knowledge through a knowledge of the whale."[7] In _Moby-Dick_ Ishmael seeks to grasp and, at the same time, to communicate, the reality of the whale through the sheer accumulation of evidence regarding it. Ishmael has, as he himself assures the reader, "swam through libraries and sailed through oceans"(MD, 118). According to Howard P. Vincent, the whale is examined "in almost every aspect: biological, sociological, phrenological, paleontological, historical, anatomical, and economical."[8] Certainly, that is what Ishmael would have the reader believe. "The classification of the constituents of a chaos," declares Ishmael, "nothing less is here essayed"(MD, 117).[9]

Ishmael is, however, plagued by doubts regarding man's ability to gain any kind of meaningful knowledge whatsoever; he repeatedly apologizes for his own lack of knowledge regarding the whale and, more than once, despairs of knowing anything about him at all. "Dissect him how I may," he declares in his chapter on "The Tail," ". . . I but go skin deep; I know him not and never will"(MD, 318). If, as is frequently argued, Ishmael burlesques the scientific method in Moby-Dick, he does so because, like Ahab, he is concerned, not with surface appearances, but with the reality those surfaces conceal.[10] As his chapter on "The Whiteness of the Whale" makes evident, Ishmael is acutely conscious of the subjective nature of his perceptions and that, as Emerson notes, "we have no means of correcting these colored and distorting lenses which we are, or of computing the amount of their error."[11] Indeed, underlying that chapter is Ishmael's recognition that his understanding of the whale is necessarily subjective. Thus he does not attempt to explain what the White Whale means, but what, at times, it means to him (MD, 163).

For Ishmael, Moby Dick's whiteness, which, he observes, "is not so much a color as the visible absence of color, and at the same time the concrete of all colors," symbolizes the ungraspable phantom of life underlying Nature's all too deceptive surfaces, the reality which, he suggests, is colored in the act of perception. "When we consider," Ishmael remarks, the "theory of the natural philosophers,"

> that all other earthly hues--every stately or lovely emblazoning--the sweet tinges of sunset skies and woods yea, and the gilded velvets of butterflies, and the butterfly cheeks of young girls; all these are but subtile deceits, not actually inherent in substances, but only laid on from without; so that all deified Nature absolutely paints like the harlot, whose allurements cover nothing but the charnel-house within; and when we proceed further, and consider that the mystical cosmetic which produces every one of her hues, the great principal of light, for ever remains white or colorless in itself, and if operating without medium upon matter, would touch all objects, even tulips and roses, with its own blank tinge--pondering all this, the palsied universe lies before us a leper; and like wilful travellers in Lapland, who refuse to wear colored and coloring glasses upon their eyes, so the wretched infidel gazes himself blind at the monumental white shroud that wraps all the prospect around him. (MD, 169-70)

The fact is, however, that while man can ponder the possibility--which is precisely what Ishmael invites the reader to do --he can do little more. He may suspect that all "deified Nature absolutely paints like the harlot; he may suspect that "the palsied universe lies before [him] a leper," but he cannot see with anything other than his eyes and they necessarily color his vision. Ishmael raises the possibility but he does not, because he cannot, assert the reality. He raises the possibility in order to suggest "in some dim, random way . . . what, at times, [the White Whale] was to [him].

Ishmael, Moby Dick is a symbol of the possibility of nihilism, a nihilism J. Hillis Miller describes as "the nothingness of consciousness when consciousness becomes the foundation of everything."[12]

If Ishmael is acutely conscious of the role of the perceiving subject in the knowing process, he is no less so concerning the role of the self in the act of writing. If the external world threatens to become a subjective phenomenon, so does literature; if no objective knowledge is possible, then meaning itself necessarily becomes a personal creation: it must be sought in the perceiving consciousness and not in the object of perception. "Book!" declares Stubb in "The Doubloon," "You'll do to give us the bare words and facts, but we come in to supply the thoughts." Almost as an afterthought he adds, "That's my small experience, so far as the Massachusetts calendar, and Bowditch's navigator, and Daboll's arithmetic go" (MD, 360-61).

As Paul Brodtkorb Jr. points out, "Ishmaelean truth . . . is the truth of relativity."

> If Ishmaelean man must confer meaning on things, the things are processional and the meaning is dictated by the changeable limits of his moods. Meaning is an integral part of reality, but reality does not exist apart from consciousness. Reality and meaning are the relation of man and world; they are the quality of his concern with the things of his world: a coffin may 'be' a coffin, but 'by a mere hap' of man's purposeful concern it may also be a sea-chest, then a life buoy--ultimately, in its potentiality it 'is' all three at once, for Ishmaelean Being is becoming and is therefore always touched with possibility; with, that is, nothingness.[13]

If Ishmael is self-conscious about having Moby-Dick scouted at as a "hideous and intolerable allegory," it is because, in his narrative, he attempts to grasp life's ungraspable phantom by creating a work of art which contains within itself life's infinite variety and, consequently, also its infinite potentiality of meaning. Like the gold doubloon which Ahab nails to the mainmast of the *Pequod*, Ishmael's narrative is susceptible to a wide variety of interpretations, the ultimate effect of which is to force the reader into a recognition of the relativity of meaning.

In *The Salt-Sea Mastodon*, Robert Zoellner argues that "the difference between Ahab, the dramatic expositor of *Moby-Dick*, and Ishmael, the narrative expositor, is epistemological. They do not agree on the relationship between perceiver and perceived." Unlike Ishmael, Zoellner suggests, Ahab cannot find a substantive identity between the subjective and objective worlds nor will he consider the possibility that "*the perceiver himself may possibly contribute something to the data of perception*."[14] The difference between Ahab and Ishmael is developed in the novel, however, less in these terms than in terms of the fact that whereas, in the course of his quest, Ishmael becomes increasingly more open to life's infinite variety and more acutely sensitive to its many ambiguities, Ahab grows progressively more obsessed by his own personal vision of the White Whale and significantly more closed to experiences which challenge the truth of that vision. Indeed, Walter Bezanson has described Ahab's tragedy as his gradual abandonment of what he terms Ahab's "great gift for symbolic perception."[15]

"What plays the mischief with the truth" Melville wrote to Hawthorne during the composition of Moby-Dick, "is that men will insist upon the universal application of a temporary feeling or opinion"(L, 131). Ahab is just such a man. He insists upon conceiving the White Whale as the incarnation of all evil, of "all that maddens and torments; all that stirs up the lees in things; all truth with malice in it; all that cracks and sinews and cakes the brain; all the subtle demonisms of life and thought"(MD, 160). On the other hand, Ishmael who, for a time, is caught up in Ahab's vision--"What skiff in tow of a seventy-four," he asks, "can stand still" (MD, 163)?--and can see "naught in that brute but the deadliest ill," ultimately views the White Whale with an "equal eye." "There is," Ishmael declares, "a wisdom that is woe; but there is a woe that is madness. And there is a Catskill eagle in some souls that can alike dive down into the blackest gorges, and soar out of them again and become invisible in the sunny spaces"(MD, 353).

Ishmael's final stance is not one of suspended judgment but one which asserts the need for both faith and disbelief: "Doubts of all things earthly, and intuitions of somethings heavenly; this combination," Ishmael declares, "makes neither believer nor infidel, but makes a man who regards them both with equal eye"(MD, 314). The effect of Ishmael's pervasive irony is to keep before the reader the recognition that life's ungraspable phantom can be glimpsed but not grasped. Like

Narcissus, "who because he could not grasp the tormenting, mild image he saw in the fountain, plunged into it and was drowned," and, like the "hollow-eyed" young Platonist in the mast-head who "takes the mystic ocean at his feet for the visible image of that deep, blue bottomless soul, pervading mankind and nature," Ahab mistakes the image itself for an objective reality and drowns in a willing suspension of disbelief. Only Ishmael who "amid the tornadoed Atlantic of his being" can "still desport in mute calm," survives, to be reborn, like Bulkington, out of the spray of the Pequod's ocean-perishing.

II Moby-Dick as Autobiography

The figure of Ahab, "a grand, ungodly, god-like man" (MD, 76) "chasing with curses a Job's whale round the world" (MD, 162), dominates the greater part of Moby-Dick. Even when Ahab is not physically present, his influence in the narrative is strongly felt: he haunts Moby-Dick as strongly as the White Whale haunts Ahab's own consciousness. Nevertheless, Moby-Dick is Ishmael's narrative not Ahab's. Although once Ahab effectively takes command of the Pequod, Ishmael frequently seems to disappear from the narrative his disappearances, and the dramatic mode into which the narrative repeatedly moves, are attributable less to Melville's careless use of point of view than to his self-conscious attempts to mask the subjective origins of his art by removing his narrator from the center of the narrative. If Melville removes his narrator from the center of the narrative, he does so not simply to mask the subjective origins of his art, but to assert the transcendent nature of the vision Ishmael communicates. Subjective reflections, in effect, become objectified as drama. Melville's narrator, however, does not escape from Moby-Dick but into it. As Glauco Cambon points out, Ishmael is "invisibly present through his narration when he ceases to be directly present in it." Ishmael is, Cambon notes, "the self-ironizing writer seeking, and finally achieving, realization through self-effacement in the work of art."[16]

The narrator's attempt to achieve realization through self-effacement occurs in the opening line of his narrative. As several commentators have noted, the narrator of Moby-Dick does not state that his name is Ishmael; he simply invites his readers to call him Ishmael.[17] The opening line of Moby-Dick is, at once, both a call to affability and an assertion of distance. The reader is, Paul Brodtkorb Jr. asserts, put "in the presence of someone who for reasons of his own would rather not say who he really is." But, if the name "Ishmael" is self-adopted, he observes,

> it is, with all its allusiveness, doubtless a more accurate designation of him than its sayer's real name, for it clearly signifies his sense of himself and his world. But because behind the show of affability a real name is witheld, Ishmael remains to some extent a stranger, a man in a false position; and because he does, as soon as the self-bestowed name is spoken, the shadow of nothingness is upon the book.[18]

However, to one who believes, as Melville does, that "the names of all fine authors are fictitious ones . . . simply standing as they do, for the mystical, ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty, which ubiquitously possesses men of genius"(HHM, 553), the name he chooses is as appropriate as any other: his invitation to his readers to call him "Ishmael" is, in fact, not the assumption of a false position, but the assertion of a greater reality. Melville's use of the name "Ishmael" is not unlike Hawthorne's assertion, in "The Custom House" introduction to *The Scarlet Letter*, of his "true position as editor." In both instances, the authors expend art in an attempt to mask its subjective origins.

Although, as Beongcheon Yu notes, "*Moby-Dick* has often been called a work *sui generis*," it is closely related to the form of the autobiography developed during the Romantic period.

> Scholars have often noted that Melville, critical of Emerson's brand of Transcendentalism, reacted against the Romantic spirit in general. But the truth is that Melville was basically Romantic as much as he was counter-Romantic. And precisely because of this he was more acutely aware of inner conflicts in Romanticism and more than other Romantic [sic] dived deeply in quest of survival and *almost* succeeded. Ishmael, with greater stamina and 'an everlasting itch for things remote,' fares even better. So dynamic an 'I' as narrator is peculiarly Romantic, unlike the classical mode which limits an 'I' to a technical convenience. The first person point of view was common in autobiographies, adventures, and travel stories, but Romantic writers elevated and elaborated this essentially lyrical technique into a more consciously symbolic vehicle.[19]

Although Yu regards *Moby-Dick* as "the culmination of Melville's earlier romances," he argues that Ishmael stands apart from Melville's earlier heroes in that "he alone can objectify himself to his searching consciousness and endow his experiences with symbolic significance." "Melville's originality," Yu argues, "lies in his ability to intensify Ishmael's cultural quest by the drama of Ahab, or more properly by the tragedy of the Pequod which serves him as one grand lesson."[20]

As Yu suggests, Moby-Dick can best be understood in relation to the Romantic conception of the growth of the mind and to the distictively Romantic form of the autobiography to which that conception gave rise. Like other Romantic autobiographies, Moby-Dick is concerned not only with the growth of the mind, but with the possibility of overcoming subjectivity and achieving objectivity. According to Glauco Cambon Ishmael is "the artist in the act of telling us, and struggling to understand, his crucial experience."

> When his autobiography becomes the history of the Pequod and Ahab, he is liberated from his 'hypos' for the second time, and in a deeper sense: he attains the liberation of imaginative objectivity. Thus his vanishing from the stage after a certain point does not constitute a breach of poetical continuity, but a dialectical movement that reproduces and expands the repeated transition from narrative to drama, from memory to visionary actuality, from conjuring subjectivity to conjured objectivity.[21]

In struggling to understand "his crucial experience," Ishmael, in effect, attempts to fathom the meaning of life itself, to grasp "the great gliding demon of the seas of life"(MD, 162) which, he implies, haunts the depths of the unconscious in all men alike. His narrative represents an attempt to grasp that phantom in language and, by doing so, to make it perceptible to the reading public.

In his autobiography Ishmael re-enacts the Romantic quest within the self, a quest in which the traditional pattern of Christian eschatology, Eden, Fall and Redemption, is transformed into "the new triad of nature, self-consciousness, imagination."[22] If, as Yvor Winters observes, "the symbolism of Moby-Dick is based on the antithesis of the sea and the land," that antithesis bodies forth the Romantic concern with the necessity of escaping from subjectivity through the discovery of an objective basis for certitude within the self. "The land," Winters argues, "represents the known, the mastered, in human experience; the sea, the half-known, the obscure region of instinct, uncritical feeling, danger, and terror."[23] "In the port," states Ishmael, "is safety, comfort, hearthstone, supper, warm blankets, friends, all that's kind to our mortalities"(MD, 97). In Moby-Dick, the land, indeed, frequently becomes a symbol of nature in the Edenic state, a "green, gentle, and most docile earth;" and the sea, which, Ishmael repeatedly reminds his readers, "is the dark side of the earth"(MD, 355), a symbol of the unconscious into which man must descend if he is to transcend self-consciousness.

"Consider," Ishmael admonishes his readers, "the subtleness of the sea;"

> how its most dreaded creatures glide under water unapparent for the most part, and treacherously hidden beneath the loveliest tints of azure. Consider also the devilish brilliance and beauty of many of its most remorseless tribes, as the dainty

> embellished shape of many species of sharks. Consider, once more, the universal cannibalism of the sea; all whose creatures prey upon each other, carrying on eternal war since the world began.
> Consider all this; and then turn to this green, gentle and most docile earth; consider them both, the sea and the land; and do you not find a strange analogy to something in yourself? For as this appalling ocean surrounds the verdant land, so in the soul of man there lies one insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy, but encompassed by all the horrors of the half-known life. God keep thee! Push not off from that isle, thou canst never return! (MD, 235-36)

To push off from that Edenic isle is to encounter the void, "the monumental white shroud" which, Ishmael fears, "wraps all the prospect around him"(MD, 170). In _Moby-Dick_ Ishmael confronts that void and, in doing so, passes through it into a world in which coffins do, indeed, become life-buoys and "unharming sharks" glide by "as if with padlocks on their mouths" and "the savage sea-hawks [sail] with sheathed beaks" (MD, 470).

"Nothing in _Moby-Dick_, not the squid nor the shark nor Leviathan," argues Robert Zoellner, terrifies "Ishmael more than his _own mind_."

> Whatever sharkishness he has perceived in the external world could hardly match the conceptual and imaginative sharkishness which perceptually darkens the clear stream of thought. 'For we are all killers, on land and on sea,' he asserts, 'Bonapartes and Sharks included.' In thought, in intention, in desire, in impulse, in image, all men are capable of horrors for which no words are adequate and no symbols sufficient. It is this fear of the mind--his own mind--which is the final measure of Ishmael's illness. By the same token, it will be through reconciliation with the terrible facts of mind that Ishmael's recovery can best be measured.[24]

As a symbol of the unconscious, the sea bodies forth the horrors within, "the mighty leviathans, sword-fish and sharks" of the mind. It is these horrors Ishmael must face when he decides to take to the sea as a "substitute for pistol and ball"(MD, 12).

If the antithesis of land and sea is used in Moby-Dick to symbolize contrary states in the growth of the mind, these states are, in additon, personified in the principal characters of the narrative. According to Robert Zoellner, file-toothed Queequeg is the "anthropomorphic correlate" of the "universal cannibalism of the seas:"

> He is the internal and hidden sharkishness of all men made external and visible. His tattooed hide and nightmare visage delineate the heart of darkness, and all that is horrible and demonic in what man does.[25]

Queequeg symbolizes the mysterious, hidden self which both Ishmael and Ahab must confront. But what, for the latter two, is hidden and mysterious, is, in Queequeg, visually expressed, written out on his body and in his life. "In his own proper person," Ishmael exclaims, Queequeg "was a riddle to unfold; a wonderous work in one volume; but whose mysteries not even himself could read, though his own live heart beat against them"(MD, 399). But the significance of Queequeg lies precisely in his unquestioning existence as the mystery that he is. Queequeg is the natural man: he lives in nature, not apart from it. Having never fallen, having never descended into the dualistic vision of subject and object, Queequeg has never lost touch with the "tormenting, mild image" which haunts both Ishmael and Ahab.

Queequeg, in effect, personifies the unselfconsciousness man possessed in the Edenic state. Scrutinizing Queequeg soon after their first night together, Ishmael notes that his companion

> never heeded my presence, never troubled himself with so much as a single glance; but appeared wholly occupied with counting the pages of the marvellous book. Considering how sociably we had been sleeping together the night previous, and especially considering the affectionate arm I had found thrown over me upon waking in the morning, I thought this indifference of his very strange. But savages are strange beings; at times you do not know exactly how to take them. At first they are overawing; their calm self-collectedness of simplicity seems a Socratic wisdom. I had noticed also that Queequeg never consorted at all, or but very little, with the other seamen in the inn. He made no advances whatever; appeared to have no desire to enlarge the circle of his acquaintances. All this struck me as mighty singular; yet, upon second thoughts, there was something almost sublime in it. Here was a man some twenty thousand miles from home, by the way of Cape Horn, that is--which was the only way he could get there-thrown among people as strange to him as though he were in the planet Jupiter; and yet he seemed entirely at his ease; preserving the utmost serenity; content with his own companionship; always equal to himself. Surely this was a touch of fine philosophy; though no doubt he had never heard there was such a thing as that. But perhaps, to be true philosophers, we mortals should not be conscious of so living or so striving. (MD, 52)

It is this unity of consciousness, Queequeg's self-collected unselfconsciousness, that Ishmael celebrates throughout Moby-Dick. Later, witnessing the totally unassuming manner in which Queequeg miraculously rescues a "poor bumpkin" who minutes earlier had been mimicking him, Ishmael exclaims: "Was there ever such unconsciousness?"(MD, 61).

While Queequeg personifies the unity of consciousness man possessed in the Edenic state, a unity of consciousness wherein man is one with the objects of his perception and lives in what he perceives, Ahab bodies forth the divided consciousness, man possessed by a dualistic, subject-object vision of reality, man divided against himself. Ahab is his own worst enemy: the man-eating whale he pursues is within him, feeding upon him as he feeds upon it. "God help thee, old man," Ishmael exclaims, "thy thoughts have created a creature in thee, and he whose intense thinking thus makes him a Prometheus; a vulture feeds upon that heart for ever; that vulture the very creature he creates"(MD, 175). The White Whale, Ishmael observes,

> swam before [Ahab] as the monomaniac incarnation of all those malicious agencies which some deep men feel eating in them, till they are left living on with half a heart and half a lung. That intangible malignity which has been from the beginning; to whose dominion even the modern Christians ascribe one-half of the worlds; which the ancient Ophites of the east reverenced in their statue devil;--Ahab did not fall down and worship it like them; but deliriously transferring its idea to the abhorred white whale, he pitted himself, all mutilated, against it. (MD, 160)

In the White Whale Ahab objectifies the intangible malignity within himself and, in refusing to recognize the subjective origins of the "great, gliding demon" he seeks, drowns, as Narcissus does, a victim of his own creation.

As at least one scholar has noted, "to have a proper view of Ishmael's ordering of experience" it is necessary to "read Moby-Dick backwards from [the] vortex" out of which Ishmael is reborn.[26] The Ishmael who enters the gable-ended Spouter Inn and peers through the darkness at the large, besmoked and defaced oil painting hanging in the entry is not the same man who relates the tale of the White Whale. Whereas the narrator of Moby-Dick speaks as one who has passed through the vortex, the Ishmael to whom he introduces the reader in the opening pages of the narrative has not yet confronted the darkness within himself. Nevertheless, he has caught glimpses of it and, in taking to the sea, attempts, like Narcissus before him, to grasp the image he sees reflected there.

Although, at the outset of his quest, Ishmael cleaves to Queequeg "like a barnacle" never to be separated from him "till poor Queequeg took his last long dive"(MD, 61); and, although, as one of "a cosy, loving pair," he opens "the very bottom" of his soul to him, it is ultimately not Queequeg but Ahab, "in all his Nantucket grimness and shagginess," whom Ishmael must follow in the quest within. For, while Queequeg stands before Ishmael as a living embodiment of the darkness within man--Queequeg is, in effect, that darkness turned inside out--he does not speak to Ishmael's condition as does Ahab. Ishmael cannot turn back and Queequeg represents a unity of consciousness which civilized man has lost irrevocably. Although, as Robert Zoellner argues, Queequeg is "Melville's portrait and Ishmael's paradigm of what man must remain," he is not an example of what civilized man can become.[27] Ahab speaks to Ishmael's condition because both share that conditon; both are intent upon striking through the "pasteboard mask" of sensual perceptions and, thus, finding a way out of the morass of inwardness.

Ishmael's autobiography is, in essence, the narrative of his gradual identification with, and ultimate detachment from, Ahab's vision of the universe as that vision is expressed in the "pasteboard mask" speech he delivers in "The Quarter-Deck" chapter of the narrative. Shortly after Ahab makes that speech, Ishmael reveals that he has identified his quest with Ahab's:

> I, Ishmael, was one of that crew; my shouts had gone up with the rest; my oath had been welded with theirs; and stronger I shouted, and more did I hammer and clinch my oath, because of the dread in my soul. A wild, mystical, sympathetical feeling was in me; Ahab's quenchless feud seemed mine. (MD, 155)

As Glauco Cambón notes, the "initial phrase, 'I, Ishmael, was one of the crew,' rivals the felicitious opening of the whole narration: 'Call me Ishmael.'"[28] Ishmael's narrative, in effect, begins anew. In confessing that his shout "had gone up with the rest, Ishmael acknowledges his complicity in Ahab's monomaniac revenge and seeks to explain how earlier, as a member of the ship's crew, he had "so aboundingly responded to the old man's ire" so that "[Ahab's] hate seemed almost [his]; the White Whale, as much [his] insufferable foe as [Ahab's]"(MD, 162).

What Ishmael suggests, though characteristically he despairs of his ability to put it into comprehensible form, is that for himself, as for the crew as a whole, the White Whale seemed, at the time, to his "unconscious understanding . . . in some dim, unsuspected way . . . the gliding great demon of the seas of life"(MD, 162). In "The Whiteness of the Whale" chapter, and throughout Moby-Dick as a whole, Ishmael attempts to explain what this demon-phantom meant to him at the time; he endeavors, in effect, to make his previously "unconscious understanding" conscious and, in doing so, to communicate it to his readers. Although he fears that to do so might be "to dive deeper than Ishmael can go," he nevertheless asserts that, "in some dim, random way, explain myself I must, else all these chapters might be naught"(MD, 163).

In the chapters following Ishmael's admission that he had earlier identified his quest with Ahab's, the literal level of the tale becomes secondary to his narrative attempts to grasp the objective reality of the whale. If, in what Howard Vincent terms the "cetological center" of Moby-Dick, Ishmael, the narrator, burlesques man's attempt to gain objective knowledge, his action foreshadows the younger Ishmael's later recognition of Ahab's madness.[29] Ishmael burlesques the concern with objective knowledge because it commonly ignores the subjective component involved in the act of knowing. Attempts to gain objective knowledge result not in greater understanding but in the mountain of "higgledy-piggledy" whale statments of the kind "supplied by a sub-sub-librarian" and too often taken for "veritable gospel cetology" (MD, 2). Similarily, Ishmael's rejection of Ahab's monomaniac vision involves a recognition that what one sees depends, for the most part, upon who is doing the seeing and the circumstances conditioning the act of perception.

The climactic chapter in Ishmael's rejection of Ahab's fiery vision occurs in "The Try-Works" chapter of the narrative. In that chapter Ishmael recounts a visionary experience he had "at a midnight helm," an experience occasioned, he remarks, by the "continual sight of the fiend shapes before me, capering half in smoke and half in fire" as they engage in "trying out" the corpse of a whale. These sights, he recalls, "begat kindred visions in my soul, so soon as I began to yield to that unaccountable drowsiness which ever would come over me at a midnight helm."

> Starting from a brief standing sleep, I was horribly conscious of something fatally wrong. The jaw-bone tiller smote my side, which leaned against it; in my ears was the low hum of sails, just beginning to shake in the wind; I thought my eyes were open; I was half conscious of putting my fingers to the lids and mechanically stretching them still further apart. But, spite of all this, I could see no compass before me to steer by; though it seemed but a minute since I had been watching the card, by the steady binnacle lamp illuminating it. Nothing seemed before me but a jet gloom, now and them made ghastly by flashes of redness. Uppermost was the impression, that whatever swift rushing thing I stood on was not so much bound to any haven ahead as rushing from all havens astern. A stark, bewildered feeling, as of death, came over me. Convulsively my hands grasped the tiller, but with the crazy conceit that the tiller was, somehow, in some enchanted way, inverted. My God! what is the matter with me? thought I. Lo! in my brief sleep I had turned myself about, and was fronting the ship's stern, with my back to her prow and the compass. In an instant I faced back, just in time to prevent the vessel from flying up into the wind, and very probably capsizing her. How glad and how grateful the relief from this unnatural hallucination of the night, and the fatal contingency of being brought by the lee! (MD, 354)

Gazing into the fire Ishmael has a "kindred" vision of the "dark side of the earth" and of its counterpart in the soul of man. In that moment of recognition he catches a glimpse of the fact that "the rushing Pequod, freighted with savages, and laden with fire, and burning a corpse and plunging into the blackness of darkness" is a counterpart not only of her "monomanical commander's soul" but, to the extent that he has identified himself with Ahab's quest, of his own as well. Ishmael recognizes that to give oneself up to the fire, as Ahab has done, is to see naught in the world but evil: he recognizes that while there is "a wisdom that is woe," there is also "a woe that is madness" and, in that moment of recognition, rejects Ahab's vision of the White Whale.

The equivocating nature of Ishmael's comments concerning his experience, and equivocation evident both in the qualification of the views expressed in one paragraph by those expressed in each succeeding one, a "nevertheless . . . but" structure, suggests the experiential nature of the truth he seeks to convey. "Look not too long in the face of the fire, O man!", Ishmael exclaims in a tone at once highly serious and mocking:

> Never dream with thy hand on the helm! Turn not thy back to the compass; accept the first hint of the hitching tiller; believe not the artificial fire, when its redness makes all things look ghastly. Tomorrow, in the natural sun, the skies will be bright; those who glared like devils in the forking flames, the morn will show in far other, at least, gentler, relief; the glorious, golden, glad sun, the only true lamp--all others but liars!
> (MD, 354)

"Nevertheless," he cautions the readers,

> the sun hides not Virginia's Dismal Swamp, nor Rome's accursed Campagna, nor wide Sahara, nor all the millions of miles of deserts and of griefs beneath the

> moon. The sun hides not the ocean, which is the dark side of this earth, and which is two thirds of this earth. So, therefore, that mortal man who hath more joy than sorrow in him, that mortal man cannot be true--not true or undeveloped. With books the same. The truest of all men was the Man of Sorrows, and the truest of all books is Solomon's, and Ecclesiastes is the fine hammered steel of woe. 'All is vanity,' ALL. This wilful world hath not got hold of unchristian Solomon's wisdom yet. (MD, 355)

However, this view is itself qualified:

> But even Solomon, he says, 'the man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain' (i.e. even while living) 'in the congregation of the dead.' Give not thyself up, then, to fire, lest it invert thee; as for the time it did me. (MD, 355)

Ishmael's comments, the meaning he attempts to extract from his experience, point to a disequilibrium between experience and idea, the fact that "the imaginative apprehension gained through immediate experience is primary and certain whereas the analytical reflection is secondary and problematical."[30] The final impression left by Ishmael's rhetoric is one which stresses the need of a balanced view, a way of being-in-the-world that enables an individual to see events from more than one point of view. "There is a wisdom that is woe; but," Ishmael cautions the reader, "there is a woe that is madness."

> And there is a Catskill eagle in some souls that can alike dive down into the blackest gorges, and soar out of them again and become invisible in the sunny spaces. And even if he for ever flies within the gorge, that gorge is in the mountains; so that even in his lowest swoop the mountain eagle is still higher than other birds upon the plain, even though they soar. (MD, 355)

For Ishmael, the true man is he who sees with "equal eye," who dives deeply and yet retains the ability to soar, who neither gives himself up to the "blackness of darkness" nor loses himself in "a jar of spermaceti."

In projecting the horrors within himself on to the White Whale and, in attempting to wreak his vengeance upon it, Ahab refuses to recognize his own propensity to evil: he is unable to come to terms with his inner self and dies a victim of his own creation. Ishmael, however, is able to achieve the unity of being that eludes Ahab. The primitive self which is Queequeg and which, in the epilogue to the narrative is symbolized by Queequeg's tattooed coffin, is assimilated by Ishmael into the "vital center" of his selfhood. "Ishmael," argues John Halverson, becomes "a whole man, and Queequeg is the accredited agent of his humanity and salvation. Ishmael is a beautiful and free soul 'that can alike dive down into the blackest gorges, and soar out of them again and become invisible in the sunny spaces.'"[31] Having achieved that wholeness, Ishmael floats unharmed amid the terrors of the world.

III Ishmael's Symbolic Method

In Moby-Dick the motif of the quest is not only a figure for self-discovery and realization, but, as Geoffrey Hartman notes of Romantic literature generally, "a sustained metaphor for the experience of the artist during creation."[32] Paralleling Ahab's quest for the White Whale, a quest to which Ishmael abandons himself throughout the greater part of Moby-Dick, is Ishmael's attempt, as narrator, to grasp "that demon phantom that," he asserts, "some time or other, swims before all human hearts"(MD, 204). Underlying the continuing critical debate concerning the meaning (or meaninglessness) of Ishmael's survival is, for the most part, the assumption that his survival is meaningful only to the extent that it bodies forth some insight, some final truth Ishmael himself achieves.[33] For the Romantic, however, the quest does not commonly lead "to what is generally called a truth: some final station for the mind." The transition from self-consciousness to a union with the ground of all consciousness "remains as problematic a crossing as that from death to second life or from exile to redemption."[34] The transition remains problematic because the object of the quest is an infinite one, one "which lies forever beyond the reach of man, whose possibilities are limited by the conditions of a finite world."[35]

Romantic truth is the ongoing truth of experience. What Robert Langbaum states with regard to Romantic poetry is applicable to Romantic literature as a whole: Romantic poetry is, he argues, a poetry of experience, a poetry "constructed upon the deliberate disequilibrium between experience and idea, a poetry which makes its statement not as an idea but as an experience from which one or more ideas can be abstracted as problematical rationalizations.[36] In Moby-Dick Ishmael recounts his experiences aboard the Pequod but, in doing so, professes his inability to grasp the ungraspable phantom which he dimly discerns beneath the surface of his experiences. He offers the reader not Truth but surmise.[37] He has learned as Ahab has not, that "the gliding great demon of the seas of life"(MD, 162) can be imaged but not grasped. In continually reminding his readers of the disequilibrium between experience and idea, Ishmael attempts to create an awareness of the dynamic, and ultimately ungraspable, nature of life itself.

Speaking in "The Gilder" of the "few fleeting moments" in life in which man can feel "the cool dew of the life immortal" on the "grassy glades" and "ever vernal endless landscapes in the soul," Ishmael exclaims:

> Would to God these blessed calms would last. But the mingled, mingling threads of life are woven by warp and woof: calms crossed by storms, a storm for every calm. There is no steady unretracing progress in this life; we do not advance through fixed gradations, and at the last one pause:--through infancy's unconscious spell, boyhood's thoughtless faith, adolescence' doubt (the common doom), then skepticism, then disbelief, resting at last in manhood's pondering repose of If. But once gone through, we trace the round again; and are infants, boys, and men, and Ifs eternally. Where lies the final harbor, whence we unmoor no more? In what rapt ether sails the world, of which the weariest will never weary? Where is the foundling's father hidden? Our souls are like orphans whose unwedded mothers die in bearing them: the secret of our paternity lies in their grave, and we must there to learn it.
> (MD, 406)

If, as Paul Brodtkorb Jr. argues, Ishmael frequently seems to offer the reader no firm standpoint from which to view the events related in Moby-Dick, it is because, for Ishmael, no such standpoint exists. Life, he asserts, must be recognized for the unending process it is. Meaning exists only in experience; it "is constantly generated in the dynamic relation between man's consciousness and his world." Consequently, to understand Moby-Dick, the reader is "forced to be and to project what is in himself."[38]

To attempt to discover a final Truth in Moby-Dick is to scout at it as a "hideous and intolerable allegory:" it is --as Melville himself states in a letter to Hawthorne--to "insist upon the universal application of a temporary feeling or opinion"(L, 131). To read Moby-Dick backward from the vortex out of which Ishmael is reborn in the sequel to the narrative is to realize that the Truth he achieves is not the final station for his mind. And yet, while Ishmael does not achieve "the final harbor, whence we unmoor no more," he does, nonetheless, gain the "vital center" of the vortex and, in doing so, momentarily achieves the unity of Being after which he quests. At the heart of the vortex into which the Pequod is drawn, Ishmael discovers, as he had earlier in the vital center of the "Grand Armada" of whales, "not the void, but rather life in the guise of death, rebirth in an 'immortality preserver.'"[39]

> Buoyed up by that coffin, for almost one whole day and night, I floated on a soft and dirge-like main. The unharming sharks, they glided by as if with padlocks on their mouths; the savage sea-hawks sailed with sheathed beaks. On the second day, a sail drew near, nearer, and picked me up at last. It was the devious-cruising Rachel, that in her retracing search after her missing children, only found another orphan. (MD, 470)

Having completed the cycle, he begins life anew. But, having learned the deeper meaning of "that story of Narcissus," he does so on a higher plane of consciousness.

In recounting his experiences aboard the Pequod Ishmael, the sailor turned narrator, attempts to capture life's phantom in language. His narrative quest stands in relation to his earlier whaling voyage as Moby-Dick, the novel, stands in relation to the White Whale. In writing Moby-Dick Ishmael consciously seeks to unite the subjective and objective worlds to form the "one seamless whole" he had earlier experienced unthinkingly. If Ishmael's narrative tends toward drama, it is because in writing it, he objectifies himself to his own searching consciousness, dramatizing his visionary experiences in the work of art. The writer, for a time, becomes one with the work of art he creates: self-consciousness gives way to a more communal power of vision, one in which the speaker is one with his speech. Ishmael, however, does not attempt to escape into his fiction and thus to make life into art. On the contrary, he seeks to create a work of art that will more fully realize the dynamic quality of life as he has experienced it: he attempts, in effect, to make art give way to life itself. "Out of the trunk," Ishmael observes, "the branches grow; out of them, the twigs. So, in productive subjects, grow the chapters"(MD, 246).

According to Ishmael, Moby-Dick is "but a draught--nay, but a draught of a draught"(MD, 128): it is "but a draught" because the narrative quest he undertakes, like the whaling quest he recounts, is an infinite one. Ishmael's narrative is an attempt to hook the nose of the Leviathan which, he asserts, breaches in private and public seas alike: it is an attempt "to grope down into the bottom of the sea after

[him]; to have one's hands among the unspeakable foundations, ribs, and very pelvis of the world"(MD, 118). Vain is it, Ishmael declares, "to popularize profoundities, and all truth is profound"(MD, 161).

> Winding far down from within the very heart of this Hotel de Cluny where we here stand--however grand and wonderful, now quit it;--and take your way, ye nobler, sadder souls, to those vast Roman halls of Thermes; where far beneath the fantastic towers of man's upper earth, his root of grandeur, his whole awful essence sits in bearded state; an antique buried beneath antiquities, and throned on torsoes! So with a broken throne, the great gods mock that captive king; so like a Caryatid, he patient sits, upholding on his frozen brow the piled entablatures of ages. Wind ye down there, ye prouder, sadder souls! question that proud, sad king! A family likeness! aye, he did beget ye, ye young exiled royalties; and from your grim sire only will the old State-secret come. (MD, 161)

And yet, while Ishmael repeatedly despairs of putting that "awful essence" in a "comprehensible form," he nevertheless asserts that "in some dim, random way, explain myself I must, else all these chapters might be naught"(MD, 163).

As Walter E. Bezanson points out, "Ishmael's way of explaining himself in the long run is not either 'dim' or 'random.' He [is] committed to the organic method with all its possibilities and risks."

> The method of the book is unceasingly genetic, conveying the effect of a restless series of morphic-amorphic movements. Ishmael's narrative is always in process and in all but the most literal sense remains unfinished. For the reader the experience of Moby-Dick is a participation in the act of creation. Find a key word or metaphor, start to pick it as you would a wild flower, and you will find yourself ripping up the whole forest floor. Rhetoric grows into symbolism and symbolism into structure; then all falls away and begins over again.[10]

This is the "careful disorderliness" which, Ishmael claims, is the "true method" of some enterprises(MD, 304). He is unwilling to have Moby-Dick scouted at as a "hideous and intolerable allegory" because allegory assumes a fixed, one-to-one relationship between a preconceived idea and the phenomena by which that idea is expressed. The symbolism of Moby-Dick, however, is not static. It is, Bezanson notes, "in process of creation for both the narrator and the reader. Value works back and forth: being extracted from objects, it descends into the consciousness; spiraling up from the consciousness it envelops objects."[41]

Although, in Ishmael's world, meaning is revealed in the interaction between perceiving subject and the object of consciousness, the Truth discovered is ultimately thought to transcend the moment of perception, to exist as a reality beyond sensory perception. As Paul Brodtkorb, Jr. points out, "this is the basic tenet of the symbolist's method: the symbolist does not just make use of a mechanical technique, he 'sees' rather hazily something that he thinks is mysteriously contained within the symbolic object, something which is perhaps beyond his analytical powers of conception."[42] Ishmael sees life's ungraspable phantom beneath the surface of his experiences and, in Moby-Dick, seeks to express that vision. "Some certain significance," Ishmael asserts in "The Doubloon" chapter, "lurks in all things, else all things are little worth, and the round world itself but an empty cipher, except to sell by the cartload, as they do hills about Boston, to fill up some morass in the Milky Way"(MD, 358).

If, as Walter Bezanson observes, "the persistent tendency in Moby-Dick is for facts, events, and images to become symbols,"[43] underlying that tendency is the symbolist's doctrine of correspondence. Of this doctrine, Bezanson notes, Ahab makes the most concise statement. "O Nature, and O soul of man!" Ahab exclaims, "how far beyond all utterance are your linked analogies! not the smallest atom stirs or lives in matter, but has its cunning duplicate in mind"(MD, 264). In writing Moby-Dick Ishmael attempts to give utterance to these "linked analogies:" he attempts to make the internal, external, to make thought, nature and nature, thought. His symbolistic method is, in effect, his assertion that a significant relationship exists between the subjective and objective worlds: it is his assertion of man's ability to escape from personality through the discovery, at the most profound level of his being, of the ultimate identity of nature and the soul of man. To escape from personality, however, man must be able to penetrate beyond surface appearances to "the mystical, ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty" linking men with each other and the external world to the soul of man. Putting the brow of Moby-Dick before his readers, Ishmael instructs them to "Read it if [they] can."

Moby-Dick is, however, as "incomplete as life itself."[44] Although man can probe to "the very axis of reality," as

Ishmael does, he can do so only momentarily. Having achieved the vital center, Ishmael is reborn and must trace the round anew. Ishmael's narrative is an affirmation that there is no final harbor for man in this life: it is his assertion that "all deep, earnest thinking is but the intrepid effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her seas; while the wildest winds of heaven and earth conspire to cast her on the treacherous, slavish shore" (MD, 97). Ishmael has weathered the storm but the voyage itself is not yet over. The White Whale "still swims on, beckoning to whoever may dare."[45]

IV The Rhetoric of Temporality

In writing Moby-Dick Ishmael seeks to capture, if only momentarily, "the gliding great demon of the seas of life" (MD, 162) in language. The book he writes is, in effect, set before the reader as the image of that mystical, ever-elusive phantom: it is set before him as the embodiment of the great White Whale itself, that "demon phantom" which, Ishmael asserts, "at some time or other, swims before all human hearts" (MD, 204). In writing Moby-Dick Ishmael attempts to make that phantom perceptible to his readers; that is, to make those readers confront the "demon phantom" within themselves. As recent scholarship suggests, Moby-Dick is very much audience-oriented. It is audience-oriented because, throughout Moby-Dick, Ishmael attempts to draw his readers into the dynamics of the experiences he relates and, thus, to make them retrace within themselves the narrative's cyclical movement from "infancy's unconscious spell" through "manhood's pondering repose of If" and back again. In order to do so, Ishmael must not only body forth the image of life's ungraspable phantom, he must, at the same time, make his readers recognize that the work he creates is *only* an image of that phantom: he must ultimately destroy the illusion he creates, an illusion in which the reader necessarily participates, if he is to make the reader aware of the reality underlying surface appearances.

In *Ishmael's White World* Paul Brodtkorb Jr. argues that Ishmael's many moods are "the unity of his consciousness, and of his book:"

> They are the correlatives of his book's 'objects,' and as moods they are neither frivolous nor fleeting. Certain romantic philosophies would hold that they are nothing less than ontological: they are not something we have, but something we are. Whether or not that is true, *Moby-Dick* tries to persuade us to become these moods in order to discover their meanings within ourselves; it does so by submerging the initially amusing Ishmael into the ambiguous voice of the narrator, whose feelings in relation to his strange world provide analogues for ours.[46]

Throughout *Moby-Dick* Ishmael is concerned with the disequilibrium between experience and idea and attempts, through the use of all the powers of language at his command, to communicate the fullness of his experiences to his readers and to persuade those readers to become the experiences he relates in order that they might discover the meaning of his experiences within themselves. He repeatedly reminds his readers that "only in the heart of quickest perils; only when within the eddyings of his angry flukes; only on the profound unbounded sea, can the fully invested whale be found out"(MD, 378). Unless the reader can live Ishmael's experiences; unless he can make Ishmael's "demon phantom" his own, he can have no understanding of what Ishmael relates. "Unless you own the whale," Ishmael asserts, "you are but a provincial and sentimentalist in Truth"(MD, 286).

Ishmael is, in effect, concerned not only with the experience underlying Moby-Dick, but with the effect it is to have on his readers. His fear that Moby-Dick will be scouted at as "a hideous and intolerable allegory" springs, in part, from his insistence upon the primacy of experience over idea and, thus, from his desire to have the reader experience Moby-Dick, not as an abstract idea, but as a living reality. As Morton L. Ross has noted, Moby-Dick is, in part, a "deliberate program of education," one instituted by Ishmael to educate his readers in their role in reading his narrative.[47] Thus, speaking of the Sperm Whale's head in the chapter entitled "The Battering-Ram," Ishmael states:

> Now mark! Unerringly impelling this dead, impregnable, uninjurable wall, and this most buoyant thing within; there swims behind it all a mass of tremendous life, only to be adequately estimated as piled wood is--by the cord; and all obedient to one volition, as the smallest insect. So that when I shall here after detail to you all the specialities and concentrations of potency everywhere lurking in this expansive monster; when I shall show you some of his more inconsiderable braining feats; I trust you will have renounced all ignorant incredulity, and be ready to abide by this; that though the Sperm Whale stove a passage through the Isthmus of Darien, and mixed the Atlantic with the Pacific, you would not elevate one hair of your eye-brow. (MD, 285)

Ishmael wants the reader to renounce "all ignorant incredulity" but he does not want a complete suspension of disbelief. Consequently, the educational program he develops is one which is as much concerned with testing the reader's credulity as it is with clarifying the subject at hand.

To become the moods Ishmael himself experiences is to trace within oneself the basic pattern of the narrative. Ishmael's gradual identification with Ahab's quest and his subsequent rejection of it, a pattern of identification and detachment Ishmael himself re-enacts throughout Moby-Dick, is paralleled by the reader's recurring identification with and detachment from Ishmael's vision and from the hypnotic spell of his oceanic prose. Like Ishmael, who is himself made subject to Ahab's compelling, "quarter-deck" rhetoric, the reader repeatedly finds himself overwhelmed. Nor is Ishmael at all averse to pointing this fact out to his reader. Thus, in the chapter "Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish," Ishmael's tongue-in-cheek play upon the concept of loose-fish and fast-fish gives way to a series of rhetorical questions, the last of which is an indirect assertion of the reader's "captive" state.

> What was America in 1492 but a Loose-Fish, in which Columbus struck the Spanish standard by way of waifing it for his royal master or mistress? What was Poland to the Czar? What Greece to the Turk? What India to England? What at last will Mexico be to the United States? All Loose-Fish.
>
> What are the Rights of Man and the Liberties of the World but Loose-Fish? What all men's minds and opinions but Loose-Fish? What is the principle of religious belief in them but a Loose-Fish? What to the ostentatious smuggling verbalists are the thoughts of thinkers but Loose-Fish? What is

> the great globe itself but a Loose-Fish? And what are you, reader, but a Loose-Fish and a Fast-Fish, too. (MD, 334)

Much of the humor in "Fast-Fish and Loose-Fish" arises out of the application of that concept of the whale fishery to a case of adultery "wherein a gentleman, after in vain trying to bridle his wife's viciousness, has at last abandoned her upon the seas of life; but in the course of years, repenting of that step, he instituted an action to recover possession of her"(MD, 332). Once Ishmael has generated as much humor as he wants from the juxtaposition of the loose-fish, fast-fish concept with the act of adultery, he dissipates the energy gained by inviting the reader to consider the universal applicability of the concept. The reader is, however, brought up short by Ishmael's sudden application of the loose-fish, fast-fish concept to the narrator-reader relationship. Applying that concept to the narrator-reader relationship, Ishmael reasserts the distance between himself and the reader and, at the same time, gives new force to the concept.

That in the ebb and flow of his rhetoric Ishmael is intent upon making the reader both a "Loose-Fish" and a "Fast-Fish" is evident from the outset of *Moby-Dick*. As noted earlier, the opening line of Ishmael's narrative is both an invitation to affability and an assertion of distance.[48] As Warwick Waldington notes, however, once Ishmael has established that distance he becomes "more expansive and intimate."

> But the reader is still kept at a little distance from Ishmael's private feelings of grim depression

> by such devices as the air of ironically calculated exaggeration (Ishmael speaks of 'involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses,' 'bringing up the rear of every funeral,' and wanting to knock people's hats off) and the sophisticated collocation of Ishmael's own commitment to sea as a 'substitute for pistol and ball' with Cato's committing suicide 'with a philosophical flourish.' At the same time that we are being made privy to the dreary November of the narrator's soul and to his suicidal mood, the studiedly unruffled tone as well as the open exhortation urges on us a man-of-the-world response of *nil admirari*: 'There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew it, almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings toward the ocean with me.'[49]

"Having identified the personal with mankind's common experience," Waldington observes, Ishmael begins "directly implicating the reader in the dynamics of the mood."[50] He directs the reader's attention from "your insular city of Manhattoes" to the open expanses of sea and invites the reader to consider the nature of man's ceaseless attraction to it.

As Waldington notes, once Ishmael has "surrounded the sea and the dreaminess it begats with attractive connotations --aesthetic pleasure, youthfulness, holiness--" he

> abruptly sums up the allurement of water and reminds us in the same breath of its horror by alluding to the story of Narcissus and his drowning. Though the reader, caught up in the intensity of the experience, has probably forgotton why he initially began to consider the phenomenon of the sea's allure, he has full warrant now to recall that the sea was first referred to as a desperate surrogate for self-destruction. We are brought up short as we come to the heart of the mystery with the image of Narcissus' doom. The spell is ended that Ishmael has persuaded us to participate in, merging ourselves in the moods that were not so much his as ours in common with all men in oceanic self-forgetfulness.[51]

This pattern is repeated throughout Moby-Dick. The ebb and flow of Ishmael's prose seduces the reader into the state of "opium-like listlessness of vacant, unconscious reverie" Ishmael himself describes as characteristic of "hollow-eyed" young Platonists at the masthead. The reader gives himself up to the blending cadences of Ishmael's oceanic rhetoric only to be ultimately reminded of his separate identity.

The immediate effect of Ishmael's rhetoric is to force the reader back upon himself. Characteristically, Ishmael invites the reader to consider a given subject and then, in the "ambiguous, half-hinting, half-revealing, shrouded sort of talk"(MD, 88) ascribed to Elijah, proceeds to explore its possible significance for, he asserts, "some certain significance lurks in all things, else all things are little worth"(MD, 358). Thus, in the chapter entitled "Brit" Ishmael invites the reader to "Consider the subtleness of the sea." Having made several suggestive remarks concerning the "universal cannibalism" concealed beneath the "loveliest tints of azure" gracing the surface Ishmael remarks:

> Consider all this; and then turn to this green, gentle, and most docile earth; consider them both, the sea and the land; and do you not find a strange analogy to something in yourself? For as this appalling ocean surrounds the verdant land, so in the soul of man there lies one insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy, but encompassed by all the horrors of the half known life. God keep thee! Push not off from that isle, thou canst never return! (MD, 236)

Ishmael's rhetoric directs the reader from a consideration of the subtleness of the sea to its counterpart in the soul of man and to its possible implications for the readers. "God keep thee!" he exclaims, "Push not off . . . thou never canst return."

In the closing paragraph of the chapter "Cisterns and Buckets," Ishmael directs the reader's attention from the episode he has just related to a consideration of its possible implications with regard to the reading of Moby-Dick itself. Having just recounted to the reader how "through the courage and great skill in obstetrics of Queequeg, the deliverance, or rather, delivery of Tashtago was successfully accomplished," he adds:

> Now, had Tashtago perished in that head, it had been a very precious perishing; smothered in the very whitest and daintest of fragrant spermaceti; coffined, hearsed, and tombed in the secret inner chamber and sanctum sanctorum of the whale. Only one sweeter end can readily be recalled--the delicious death of an Ohio honey-hunter, who seeking honey in the crotch of a hollow tree, found such exceeding store of it, that leaning too far over, it sucked him in, so that he died embalmed. How many, think ye, have likewise fallen into Plato's honey head, and sweetly perished there? (MD, 290)

The intent of Ishmael's rhetoric is to keep the reader from similarly falling into the "Plato's honey head" of Moby-Dick itself. To do so would be to suffer the fate of Narcissus, a fate Ahab himself suffers: it would be to mistake the image itself for an objective reality, Moby-Dick for "the mystical, ever-eluding Spirit of Beauty" made momentarily perceptible through it.

The ultimate effect of Ishmael's rhetoric is to destroy the illusion it creates. Throughout Moby-Dick Ishmael attempts to force upon his readers the recognition that surface appearances are deceptive, "that all deified Nature absolutely paints like the harlot"(MD, 170) and that the "demon phantom" man glimpses in Nature has its counterpart in the soul of man. If the reader is to grasp that elusive reality as it exists in Moby-Dick he must penetrate beyond the narrative's deceptive surfaces to the "reasoning thing" that "puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask"(MD, 144). That is, the reader must encounter the book not simply as an objective reality, but as a subjective presence: he must--as Melville himself praised Hawthorne for doing--"despise the imperfect body, and embrace the soul"(L, 142). The ultimate effect of Ishmael's rhetoric is to force upon his readers the recognition that Moby-Dick is of little value in itself, simply standing as it does for "the mystical, ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty, which," Melville argues, "ubiquitously possesses men of genius."

As Warwick Waldington notes, Ishmael attempts to prepare his readers "to read the long, last enthralling section of the book, in which we must do without his guiding presence, as our final exercise in self-definition; and to emerge from its illusion, as Ishmael does in the end, in the momentary repose of If."[52] To do so is to recognize that Moby-Dick offers no final station for the mind, no final Truth: the White Whale still swims on, beckoning to all who dare. Having pushed off from the insular Tahiti within himself, man has no choice but to pursue or be pursued.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION:

PIERRE AND THE VANITY OF POPULARIZING PROFUNDITIES

The development of Melville's career from Typee to Pierre has often been described as the record of his increasing disenchantment with Emersonian Transcendentalism. Twenty-five years ago Perry Miller warned against that conception of Melville's development, arguing that the "full answer is nothing so simple."[1] Miller's words of caution are even more necessary today than they were in 1951. Evidence of Melville's anti-Transcendentalism is being found throughout his fiction and, while there is some basis for the belief that Melville satirized Transcendentalist ideas,[2] the overall effect has been to set Melville apart from the writers of his age, to make him an "archetypal modern man,"[3] and, thus, to obscure the fact that he shared with his contemporaries a common framework of ideas, one within which he, like the others, attempted to understand the problems of man. The purpose of this thesis has been to examine Melville's relation to the Romantic conception of the growth of the mind and, in so doing, to suggest a context in which Melville's literary self-consciousness can be more adequately understood. To examine Melville's work in the context of the Romantic concern with the growth of the mind is to recognize that the development of his career from Typee to Pierre is the record of his belief in the internalized quest and in the possibility of communicating the Truth discovered within to the reading public. It is to recognize, moreover, that Melville's irony is less a rhetorical device with a specific communicative end than a mode of consciousness, a way of being-in-the-world, with no end other than that already embraced by its own nature.[4]

Underlying the "anti-Transcendentalist" approach to Melville's fiction is frequently the assumption that Melville's ironic stance is necessarily a negativistic one. For example, in a recent attempt to develop an "instrumental theory of American Romanticism," Michael J. Hoffman declares that, despite a brief but "serious flirtation with the seductiveness of Transcendentalism," Melville was strongly anti-Transcendentalist. "Moby-Dick," he declares, "is a book of almost total irony."

> For what it shows is that the most elaborate of 'symbolic' tales has no real 'meaning,' except to demonstrate that things in general have no meaning; that the human quests have no function except as the most dangerous forms of diversion; that life is at its worst a struggle and at its best a surrender; and that the magnificence of great men and of works of art are only illusions that cannot capture reality because each creates a false one of its own.[5]

Hoffman, however, never really argues that the irony of Moby-Dick is nihilistic, he simply assumes that it must be. He equates irony with "nay-saying" and describes Melville as one of what he terms the "pullers-down." "The skeptical irony of the 'pullers-down,'" he asserts, "is the only possible stance for Melville."[6]

Implicit in Hoffman's conception of Ishmael's irony is the view, shared by many students of American literature, that "Romanticism" was only a stage through which Melville necessarily passed on his way to "Realism" or "Existentialism," in short, towards a more twentieth-century vision. Thus Hoffman describes Ishmael as "the new post-Transcendentalist man, whose ultimate ironic detachment will become a commonplace pose for the new 'hero' of the 'realistic' novel."[7] Sharing the general uneasiness in the twentieth-century regarding the Romantic claims of the infinitude of the private man, Hoffman makes Melville an anti-Transcendentalist in order to rescue him from the taint of Romanticism.

But, as I have attempted to demonstrate, Melville's conception of the nature and function of art is essentially Romantic. As Perry Miller notes, the point of Melville's fiction is less "that the fiery quest is wrong" than "that the terms of victory offered by the more popular (and heartless) forms of Transcendentalism--those of 'compensation'--are too easy."[8] Melville is unrelenting in his insistence upon the disequilibrium between experience and idea and, in his fiction, seeks to communicate experiences rather than ideas, experiences from which, however, one or more ideas can be abstracted as problematical rationalizations. Like other Romantic writers, Melville is acutely conscious of the subjective origins of his fiction but, like the Romantics generally, he asserts that a literary work is less a revelation of the personality of its author than of the infinite within man. The irony of Moby-Dick is not nihilistic, not simply Ishmael's means of holding back from full affirmative participation in the world, but his assertion of the necessity of seeing through appearances, of penetrating beyond the letter of written statements to "the mystical, ever-eluding Spirit of all Beauty, which," he contends, "ubiquitously possesses men of genius" (HHM, 536). Ishmaelean irony is both an assertion of the necessity of transcendence and an affirmation of the transcending power of art.

Like "the great Art of Telling the Truth," the mode of consciousness, the way of being-in-the-world, in which Ishmael attempts to instruct his readers cannot be easily, or ever completely, mastered. "The audience-awareness that Ishmael evinces is," Warwick Waldington notes, "a reflection of his creator's increasing ambivalence towards his reading public and his growing sense of the effect his readers had on his role as a serious writer."[9] Although Melville's literary self-consciousness maybe most evident in Moby-Dick, it dates back to the earliest days of his career. What began in 1846 as a debate concerning the authenticity of Typee became, in the years which followed, a conflict between what Melville felt most moved to write and what would pay. "Dollars damn me," he wrote to Hawthorne in 1851,

> and the malicious Devil is forever grinning in upon me, holding the door ajar. My dear Sir, a presentiment is on me,--I shall at last be worn out and perish, like an old nutmeg-grater, grated to pieces by the constant attrition of the wood, that is, the nutmeg. What I feel most moved to write, that is banned,--it will not pay. Yet, altogether, write the other way I cannot. So the product is a final hash, and all my books are botches. (L, 128)

Although Melville voiced these sentiments to Hawthorne during the writing of Moby-Dick, he did not subsequently dismiss it as he had his earlier narratives. Indeed, in responding to Hawthorne's laudatory comments concerning Moby-Dick, Melville speaks of the "sense of unspeakable security" he experienced knowing that Hawthorne, at least, had understood the book. "I have written a wicked book," he confides to Hawthorne, "and feel spotless as a lamb"(L, 142).

> Ineffable socialities are in me. I would sit down and dine with you and all the gods in old Rome's Pantheon. It is a strange feeling--no hopefulness is in it, no despair. Content--that is it; and irresponsibility; but without licentious inclination. I speak now of my profoundest sense of being, not of an incidental feeling. (L, 142)

As Paul Brodtkorb Jr. suggests, Melville may have thought Moby-Dick "wicked" because in writing it he had at last found the literary means through which he could "proselytize with some success for [his] heresies."[10] "Don't write a word about the book," he cautions Hawthorne, "that would be robbing me of my miserly delight"(L, 143).

Much has been written in recent years about Melville's development in the years following Moby-Dick and about the reasons why, after 1857, he abandoned his career as a publishing author. Almost all readers of Melville's fiction have been struck by the marked shift in his style after Pierre. In the early years of his authorship Melville almost invariably gives the impression of being impelled to write, like most of the Romantics, by "a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," by what, in Mardi, Babbalanja describes as a "full heart:--brimful, bubbling, sparkling"(M, 592). After Pierre, however, Melville is, in Berthoff's words, "essentially explanatory of what he has to show, rather than rhapsodically or prophetically interjective of what he is in the process of discovering."[11] The shift towards a more detached, objective style in Melville's later fiction has been attributed to a number of causes, including a rapid decline in Melville's physical and mental health (usually associated with the strain of writing Moby-Dick or, more generally, with that of writing several novels in rapid succession); his failing powers as a novelist (he is said to have "used up" the nautical experiences upon which, it is argues, he depended for his inspiration); or to a debilitating skepticism. I do not pretend to have the answer to this question nor, indeed, do I think a single answer will do. But an examination of Melville's fiction in the context of Romantic thought and literature and in terms of what Langbaum terms the "doctrine of experience" does suggest that, after Moby-Dick, at least two important things happened to Melville as an artist: he began to grow skeptical of the possibility of escaping from subjectivity and, equally as important, he began to feel that there was a complete disequilibrium between experience and idea, that what lies deepest in existence is, for the most part, unspeakable. Melville, in short, began to question the beliefs upon which his art was based.

In Pierre, as Berthoff points out, Melville imparts

> the sense of a strong sure inward knowledge of the prospects of life and of his own life in the world,

> but also of an increasing diffidence or cursoriness in the gestures expressing this knowledge. The highest flight of eloquence in Pierre is, prophetically, on the Carlylean theme of the necessity of Silence, and later stages of the novel are overrun with observations on the essential 'namelessness' or 'unspeakableness' of what lies deepest in existence.[12]

In none of his earlier works is Melville as insistent as he is in Pierre upon the complete separation between experience and idea. The attempt "to popularize profundities" (MD, 161) gives way to an overwhelming sense of the insurmountable gulf separating experience from idea, the seeker of Truth from those who hug the slavish shore.

According to Berthoff, in writing Pierre "Melville plunged, in his first essay outside the form of the first-person narrative, into the prime Romantic subject of the 'growth of the mind.'"[13] Pierre is, however, not a radical departure from the subject-matter of Moby-Dick, but a re-working of it. Like Moby-Dick, Pierre explores the possibility of escaping from subjectivity through the discovery within the self of the means of self-transcendence. In Pierre more than in Moby-Dick, however, "the journey beyond self-consciousness is shadowed by cyclicity, by paralysis before the endlessness of introspection, and by the lure of false ultimates."[14] At the outset of the novel, its hero, Pierre, lives in a state of Edenic innocence, a state from which he falls precipitously upon the appearance of a "dark lady" whom he comes to believe is his sister and with whom he subsequently lives as both brother and husband. Pierre, in effect, pushes off from the "insular Tahiti" within himself and, as a consequence of that action, soon begins to "feel himself fairly afloat within himself."

> But, as to the resolute traveler in Switzerland, the Alps do never, in one wide and comprehensive sweep, instantaneously reveal their full awfulness of amplitude--their overawing extent of peak crowded upon peak, and spur sloping on spur, and chain jammed behind chain, and all their wonderful battalionings of might; so hath heaven wisely ordained, that on first entering into the Switzerland of his soul, man shall not at once perceive its tremendous immensity; lest illy prepared for such an encounter, his spirit should sink and perish in the lowermost snows. Only by judicious degrees, appointed by God, does man come at last to gain his Mont Blanc and take an overtopping view of these Alps; and even then, the tithe is not shown; and far over the invisible Atlantic, the Rocky Mountains and the Andes are yet unbeheld. Appalling is the soul of a man! Better might one be pushed off into the material spaces beyond the uttermost orbit of our sun, than once feel himself fairly afloat within himself! (P, 284)

Pierre is the story of its hero's attempt to scale "the Switzerland of his soul" and, by doing so, to achieve, as William Wordsworth had in his ascent of Snowdon, a vision of "The Soul, the Imagination of the whole."[15] As Berthoff notes, the sensational plot of Pierre "serves chiefly for demonstrative emphasis; so the situation of incest, curiously underplayed, is principally a sign of the fearful tautologies of consciousness as it goes its natural course, and especially of its bottomless capacity for self-violence."[16] Pierre's attempt to scale the soul's heights leads only to his own death and that of others. And, for Pierre, death brings no revelation.

It is commonly thought that in writing Pierre Melville wrote his own spiritual autobiography. One of the reasons why Pierre is so susceptible to biographically-oriented criticism is the fact that the protagonist is an aspiring young author. In Pierre, however, Melville is concerned less with relating his own experiences than with dramatizing what he conceived to be the fate of all who attempt to master "the great Art of Telling the Truth." Like all profound writers Pierre is torn between his desire to write what he feels most moved to write and his recognition that such works will not pay. Pierre's books are, in the words of the narrator, "born of unwillingness and the bills of the butcher"(P, 258). And yet, write what is in him he must. "In the hour of his clamorous pennilessness," states the narrator, Pierre felt himself "goaded into an enterprise long and protracted in the execution, and of all things least calculated for pecuniary profit in the end."

> His ship's soul foresaw the inevitable rocks, but resolved to sail on, and make a courageous wreck. Now he gave jeer for jeer, and taunted the apes that jibed him. With the soul of an Atheist, he wrote down the godliest things; with the feeling of misery and death in him, he created forms of gladness and life. For the pangs in his heart, he put down hoots on the paper. And everything else he disguised under the so convieniently adjustable drapery of all-stretchable Philosophy.
> (P, 338-39)

The parallels between Melville's own predicament and that of his fictional hero are undeniable. Like Pierre, Melville "seems to have directly plagiarized from his own experiences to fill out the mood of his apparent author-hero"(P, 312).

As Edgar Dryden notes, however, the form and style of Pierre are not simply the result of either Melville's "too close identification with the vision of his hero" or of a "sudden loss of his novelistic powers:" rather, he argues, "they represent a self-conscious re-evaluation of the relationship between art and life."[17] In Pierre the consummate artistry of Moby-Dick gives way to the fear that such artistry makes the writer simply another "canting showman" (P, 337) in this world of lies. "The more and more that he wrote," the narrator states of his author-hero,

> and the deeper and deeper that he dived, Pierre saw the everlasting elusiveness of Truth; the universal lurking insincerity of even the greatest and purest written thoughts. Like knavish cards, the leaves of all great books were covertly packed. He was but packing one set the more; and that a very poor jaded set and pack indeed. (P, 339)

Pierre is both one of the most "covertly packed" of Melville's works and one of the most open for, at the same time that its narrator packs the leaves of his book, he draws his readers attention to what he is doing and thus forces upon them the recognition of the ungraspable nature of Truth and the illusory nature of art.

In Pierre the affable and cajoling narrator of Moby-Dick is replaced by an impersonal and distant one. If, as John Seelye argues, the narrator of Pierre "ubiquitously guides, urges, elucidates and comments upon the folly of his hero,"[18] he does so as a "canting showman," one who smiles ambiguously as he goes about his task. Thus, for example, early in Pierre the narrator remarks:

> Now, since we began by talking of a certain young lady that went out riding with a certain youth; and yet

> find ourselves, after leading such a merry dance, fast by a stage-house window;--this may seem rather irregular sort of writing. (P, 25)

And an irregular sort of writing it is. The narrator changes styles as quickly as he changes subjects and, in doing both, keeps before his readers an awareness of the artificiality of the world he creates. He is less a guide than a showman, one who, despite the fact that he speaks as an individual who has "gone down into himself"(P, 176), either professes his inability to fathom the depths of the human soul or draws a veil, asserting that "some nameless struggles of the soul can not be painted, and some woes will not be told"(P, 181). If, like Ishmael, he has any intuitions of "things heavenly" he is reluctant to share them with his reader. "Let the ambiguous procession of events," he declares, "reveal their own ambiguousness"(P, 181).

The self-conscious re-evaluation of the relation between art and life which Melville undertakes in Pierre results in an assertion of the insurmountable gulf separating the seeker of Truth from society, the Truth itself from the falsehoods society perpetuates, and the "great Art of Telling the Truth" from the act of writing popular romances. The difference between the two is the difference between what Plotinus Plinlimmon terms "Horological" and "Chronological" time. In a pamphlet entitled "Chronometricals and Horologicals" Plinlimmon sets forth the view that

> in an artificial world like ours, the soul of man is further removed from its God and the Heavenly Truth, than the chronometer carried to China, is from Greenwich. And, as that chronometer, if at all accurate,

> will pronounce it to be 12 o'clock high-noon, when the China local watches say, perhaps, it is 12 o'clock midnight; so the chronometric soul, if in this world true to its great Greenwich in the other, will always, in its so-called intuitions of right and wrong, be contradicting the mere local standards and watchmaker's brains of this earth. (P, 211)

The course of action Plinlimmon recommends is governed by the principle of expediency. The man who finds in himself a "chronometrical soul" should, he argues, adjust himself and live by local standards. "The God at the heavenly Greenwich," he argues, does not "expect common men to keep Greenwich wisdom in this remote Chinese world of ours; because such a thing were unprofitable for them here, and, indeed, a falsification of Himself, inasmuch as in that case, China time would be identical with Greenwich time, which would make Greenwich time wrong"(P, 212).

Pierre is, however, either unable or unwilling to live his life according to the worldly wisdom Plinlimmon advocates. He attempts to live by Heaven's Truth and feels compelled to speak that Truth. As a consequence he arrays "all men's earthly time-keepers against himself, and thereby work[s] himself woe and death"(P, 212). "What man who carries a heavenly soul in him," Plinlimmon writes

> has not groaned to perceive, that unless he committed a sort of suicide as to the practical things of the world, he never can hope to regulate his earthly conduct by that same heavenly soul? And yet by an infallible instinct he knows, that that monitor can not be wrong in itself. (P, 213)

Hounded by his publishers, "Steel, Flint & Asbestos" (who accuse him of receiving cash advances "upon the pretense of writing a popular novel . . . while passing through [their] press the sheets of a blasphemous rhapsody, filched from the vile Atheists, Lucian and Voltaire") and hunted by Glendinning Stanley and Frederic Tartan, Pierre does in fact commit suicide. But death brings no revelation. "Here then," he cries out, "is the untimely, timely end;--Life's last chapter well stitched in the middle! Nor book, nor author of the book, hath any sequel, though each hath its last lettering!--It is ambiguous still"(P, 360).

Answering to Plinlimmon's view of the incompatibility of Heaven's Truth and man's is, however, Pierre's semi-conscious, trance-like vision of Enceladus "writhing out from the imprisoning earth"(P, 345) in his attempt to storm the eternal mount. When the defiant form turns to face Pierre, Pierre sees "Enceladus no more; but on the Titan's armless trunk, his own duplicate face and features magnifiedly gleamed upon him with prophetic discomfiture and woe"(P, 346). The meaning Pierre discover in the vision is "most repulsively fateful and foreboding."

> Old Titan's self was the son of incestuous Coelus and Terran, the son of incestuous Heaven and Earth. And Titan married his mother Terra, another and accumulatively incestuous match. And thereof Enceladus was one issue. So Enceladus was born the son and grandson of and incest; and even thus, there had been born from the organic blended heavenliness and earthliness of Pierre, another mixed, uncertain, heaven-aspiring, but still not wholly earth-emancipated mood; which again, by its terrestrial taint held down to its terrestrial mother, generated there the present doubly incestuous Enceladus within him; so that the present mood of Pierre--that reckless sky-assaulting mood of his, was nevertheless on one side the grandson of the sky. For it is according to eternal fitness, that the precipitated Titan

> should still seek to regain his paternal birthright even by fierce escalade. Wherefore whoso storms the sky gives best proof he came from thither! But whoso crawls contented in the moat before the crystal fort, shows it was born within the slime, and there forever will abide. (P, 347)

In the figure of Enceladus Pierre sees his own "uncertain, heaven-aspiring, but still not wholly earth-emancipated mood" and, although he recognizes that he must suffer the fate of Enceladus, nevertheless, reaffirms his intention of storming the sky.

Pierre raises questions which call into doubt the conception of art underlying the development of Melville's career in the years preceding the publication of _Moby-Dick_. Although from the outset of his career Melville had been confronted by the public's unwillingness to believe "the tale of a traveller," he himself had rejected the succor of the port and its household truths for the open independence of his own soul's sea and, in doing so, had attempted to probe the deeper, darker regions of the world of mind. At the same time, he recognized that the Truth he sought was "mortally intolerable" in this "world of lies." "All deep, earnest thinking," Ishmael observes in _Moby-Dick_, "is but the intrepid effort of the soul to keep the open independence of her sea; while the wildest winds of heaven and earth conspire to cast her on the treacherous, slavish shore"(MD, 97). Braving those winds Melville had, in both _Mardi_ and _Moby-Dick_, celebrated the internalized quest and, in doing so, had asserted man's ability to probe at "the very axis of reality." Moreover, in his conception of fiction as "the great Art of Telling the Truth" Melville had affirmed the writer's ability to grasp the image of life's ungraspable phantom in language.

In Pierre, however, the protagonist is unmasted by the wild winds of heaven and earth and, while he refuses to be cast upon the "treacherous, slavish shore," he is, at the same time, unable to achieve any insight into the nature of Ultimate Reality. In his quest for Truth he is beset by ambiguities and driven by fate. The deeper he dives the more clearly he sees "the everlasting elusiveness of Truth" and "the universal lurking insincerity of even the greatest and purest written thoughts"(P, 339). Even the greatest and purest thoughts are ultimately lies because they are nothing more than human fabrications: like good and evil, they are nothing more than a shadow we cast. Possessed by that knowledge, Pierre is incapacitated as a writer; he is unable to escape the labyrinth of his own perceptions and ultimately gives himself up "a doorless and shutterless house for the four loosened winds of heaven to howl through"(P, 339).

As Charles Feidelson points out, if Pierre fails as a conventional novel it is "not because Melville is incapable of handling the form but because he is contemptuous of literary form in general."

> If the style of Pierre is grotesque--by turns mawkish, pretentious, and eccentric--it is the style of an author who suspects from the beginning what his hero discovers in the end, that all literature is meretrious. He suspects that the sentimental dithyrambics on nature that he parodies in his opening pages are no more fraudulent than his own 'card-packing.'[19]

But, as Feidelson himself recognizes, Melville is "not strangled by the negativity of his hero, his positive purpose somehow survives: to present his eternally undecided battle "with the angel--Art."[20] Melville's positive purpose survives because the despair he feels is occasioned less by the perils of the quest within than by his recognition of the meretriciousness of society as a whole and, thus, of the vast gulf separating the seeker of Truth from society and "the great Art of Telling the Truth" from the act of writing popular romances. In what Plinlimmon recognizes as "this artificial world of ours" the writer intent upon the Truth is forced to become a "canting showman" and that is a masquerade in which Melville would prefer not to take a part.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter One

[1] *Herman Melville: Representative Selections, With Introduction, Bibliography and Notes*, ed. Willard Thorp (New York: American Book Company, 1938), p. xl.

[2] *The Letters of Herman Melville*, ed. Merrell Davis and William H. Gilman (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), p. 130. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations of Melville's letters are from this edition, hereafter referred to as L. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses in the text.

[3] *The Example of Melville* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 8. Cf. Ronald Mason, *The Spirit Above the Dust: A Study of Herman Melville* (London: John Lehmann Ltd., 1951), p. 13.

[4] *Symbolism and American Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 163.

[5] Berthoff, p. 7.

[6] Feidelson, p. 163.

[7] *The Long Encounter: Self and Experience in the Writings of Herman Melville* (Chicago: The Uiversity of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 6.

[8] Bowen, p. 7.

[9] Feidelson, p. 163.

[10] Berthoff, p. 7.

[11] Feidelson, p. 163.

[12] Berthoff, p. 3.

[13] *Melville's Angles of Vision* (Gainesville: The University of Florida Press, 1972), p. 74.

[14] Bowen, pp. 1-2.

[15] Bowen, p. 2.

[16] *The Vision of Melville and Conrad: A Comparative Study* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1970), p. 109.

[17] Feidelson, p. 163.

[18] Berthoff, p. 57.

[19] Berthoff, p. 8.

[20] *Melville's Thematics of Form: The Great Art of Telling the Truth* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 37.

[21] Berthoff, p. 9.

[22] W. Clark Russell, "A Claim for American Literature," *North American Review*, February, 1992; rpt. *The Recognition of Herman Melville: Selected Criticism Since 1846*, ed. Hershel Parker (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1967), p. 134.

[23] *Melville's Quarrel With God* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), p. 419.

[24] Thompson, p. 420. The italics are Thompson's.

[25] *Progress Into Silence: A Study of Melville's Heroes* (Bloomington: Indianna University Press, 1970), p. 5.

[26] *Melville: The Ironic Diagram* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 5.

[27] Seelye, pp. 2-3.

[28] Seelye, pp. 2, 10.

[29] *Ishmael's White World: A Phenomenological Reading of Moby-Dick* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), p.3. The comments within parentheses are Brodtkorb's.

[30] Brodtkorb, p. 154.

[31] Joan Webber, *The Eloquent "I:" Style and Self in Seventeenth-Century Prose* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), p. 4. Webber's definition of seventeenth-century literary self-consciousness (which I here paraphrase) is, I think, equally--if not more--applicable to the literature of the Romantics.

[32] Leslie Feidler, "Archetype and Signature: A Study of the Relationship Between Biography and Poetry," *Sewanee Review*, 60 (1952), 255.

[33] "Nature and Consciousness," *Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1970), p. 1.

[34] *The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition* (1957; rpt. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963), p. 30.

[35] Langbaum, p. 36.

[36] Langbaum, p. 28.

[37] "Nature," *Nature, Addresses and Lectures*, ed. Edward Waldo Emerson (1903; rpt. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1968), p. 63.

[38] "Romanticism and 'Anti-Self-Consciousness,'" *Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1970), pp. 50-51.

[39] J. Hillis Miller, *Poets of Reality: Six Twentieth-Century Writers* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 3.

[40] Hartman, p. 53.

[41] Herman Melville, *Pierre: Or, the Ambiguities*, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1971), p. 259. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from *Pierre* are from this edition, hereafter referred to as P. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses in the text.

[42] Herman Melville, "Hawthorne and His Mosses," The Literary World, August 17th and 24th, 1850; rpt. Moby-Dick: An Authoritative Text, Reviews and Letters by Melville, Analogues and Sources, ed. Harrison Hayford and Hershel Parker (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1967), p. 542. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from this review, hereafter referred to as HHM, or from Moby-Dick, hereafter referred to as MD, are from this edition. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses in the text.

[43] "The English Romantics: The Grounds of Knowledge," SIR, 4 (1964), 33-34. Cf. Richard P. Adams, "American Renaissance: An Epistemological Problem," ESQ, 35 (Second Quarter, 1964), 2-7.

[44] Berthoff, p. 8.

[45] Literary Transcendentalism: Style and Vision in the American Renaissance (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), p. 271.

[46] "The Internalization of the Quest-Romance," The Yale Review, LVIII (Summer, 1969), 526-36; rpt. with revisions in Romanticism and Consciousness, pp. 3-24.

[47] Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Style in Romantic Literature (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1971), p. 80.

[48] The phrase "world of mind" is used by Taji to describe what he terms "these Mardian Isles" in Mardi: And a Voyage Thither, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 557. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Mardi are from this edition, hereafter referred to as M. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses in the text.

[49] Feidelson, p. 167.

[50] Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 13.

[51] Hartman, p. 54.

[52] The English Notebooks by Nathaniel Hawthorne, ed. Randall Stewart (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1962), p. 432.

[53] Twice-Told Tales (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1900), I, lv.

[54] Webber, p. 4.

[55] *The Scarlet Letter*, ed. William Charvat, Roy Harvey Pearce and Claude M. Simpson (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1962), p. 4.

[56] "So Long," *Leaves of Grass: Comprehensive Reader's Edition*, ed. Harold W. Blodgett and Sculley Bradley (New York: New York University Press, 1965), p. 505.

[57] *English Romantic Poetry: Ethos, Structure, and Symbol in Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 245-46.

[58] Feidelson, p. 43.

[59] Quoted by René Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), I, 211.

[60] Hartman, p. 54.

[61] "The Temporality of Selfhood: Metaphor and Romantic Poetry," *New Literary History*, 6 (1974), 194.

[62] *The True Voice of Feeling: Studies in English Romantic Poetry* (London: Faber and Faber, 1947), p. 20.

[63] Hamlin, p. 182.

[64] David Perkins, *The Quest for Permanence: The Symbolism of Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 25.

[65] Warwick Waldington, "Ishmael's Godly Gamesomeness: Self-Taste and Rhetoric in *Moby-Dick*," *ELH*, 39 (1972), 330.

[66] Frank G. Ryder and Bejamin Bennett, "The Irony of Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*: Its Form and Function," *PMLA*, 90 (1975), 433.

[67] Langbaum, p. 31.

[68] Emerson, "The Poet," *Essays: Second Series*, ed. Edward Waldo Emerson (1903; rpt. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1968), p. 5.

[69] Thompson, p. 6.

[70] Dryden, p. 33.

[71] Jay Leyda, The Melville Log: A Documentary Life of Herman Melville, 1819-1891 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1951), II, 648.

[72] Langbaum, p. 35.

[73] Hamlin, p. 174.

[74] The English Notebooks by Nathaniel Hawthorne, pp. 432-33.

[75] Progress Into Silence, p. 214.

[76] "Justifying One's Valuation of Blake," The Human World, III (1972), 48.

Chapter Two

[1] The Narcissus Theme in Western European Literature Up to the Early Nineteenth Century, trans. by Robert Deusnap et al. (Lund: Gleerups, 1967), p. 313.

[2] Vinge, p. 305.

[3] The Greeks and the Irrational (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), p. 148.

[4] Descent and Return: The Orphic Theme in Modern Literature (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 5.

[5] Vinge, p. 314.

[6] The Salt-Sea Mastodon: A Reading of Moby-Dick (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 46.

[7] "Experience," Essays: Second Series, pp. 75-76.

[8] Zoellner, p. 52.

[9] Natural Supernaturalism, p. 91.

[10] Natural Supernaturalism, p. 14.

[11] Natural Supernaturalism, p. 91.

[12] Earl Wasserman, "The English Romantics: The Grounds of Knowledge," SIR 4 (1964), 22; Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, p. 13.

[13] "American Renaissance: An Epistemolobical Problem," ESQ, 35 (Second Quarter, 1964), 4.

[14] Natural Supernaturalism, p. 91.

[15] The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed. A.W. Plumstead and Harrison Hayford (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), VII, 342.

[16] The Romantic Imagination (1949; rpt. New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 3-4.

[17] The Imperial Self: An Essay in American Literary and Cultural History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), p. 5.

[18] F.O. Matthiessen, The American Renaissance: Art and Experience in the Age of Emerson and Whitman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 261.

[19] "Self-Reliance," Essays: First Series, ed. Edward Waldo Emerson (1903; rpt. New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1968), p. 64.

[20] "Nature," Nature, Addresses and Lectures, p. 63.

[21] Anderson, P. 7.

[22] Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Von Schelling, "Concerning the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature," 1807, trans. Michael Bullock and published as an appendix to Herbert Read's The True Voice of Feeling, p. 335.

[23] Wasserman, p. 34.

[24] English Romantic Poetry, p. 5.

[25] Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, p. 182.

[26] "Romanticism and 'Anti-Self-Consciousness,'" *Romanticism and Consciousness*, p. 54.

[27] *English Romantic Poetry*, p. 265.

[28] Read, *The True Voice of Feeling*, p. 167, pp. 173-74.

[29] "On Poesy or Art," *Biographia Literaria*, ed. with His Aesthetical Essays by J. Shawcross (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), II, 258.

[30] *The True Voice of Feeling*, pp. 16-17.

[31] "The Internalization of the Quest-Romance," *Yale Review*, LVIII (Summer, 1969), 526-36; rpt. with revisions in *Romanticism and Consciousness*, pp. 3-24.

[32] *A Study of English Romanticism* (New York: Random House, 1968), pp. 35-36.

[33] Frye, p. 125.

[34] Frye, p. 38.

[35] *Natural Supernaturalism*, p. 83.

[36] *Natural Supernaturalism*, p. 46.

[37] Paul Delaney, *British Autobiography in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), p. 34. See also J.H. Van den Berg, *The Changing Nature of Man: Introduction to a Historical Psychology (Metabletica)*, trans. H.F. Croes (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 209-36.

[38] "Literary Reflections of the Puritan Character," *JHI*, 29 (1968), 14.

[39] *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. F.L. Battles (London: SCM Press, 1960), I, 35.

[40] John Beadle, *The Journal or Diary of a Thankful Christian*, 1656; quoted by Wolff, p. 17.

[41] Wolff, p. 15.

[42] Wolff, pp. 16-17.

[43] Delaney, p. 11.

[44] The Rise of Puritanism (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), p. 151.

[45] Wolff, p. 26.

[46] G.A. Starr, Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 29.

[47] Starr, pp. 13-14.

[48] Starr, p. 17.

[49] Haller, pp. 128, 130.

[50] Haller, pp. 130-31.

[51] Haller, p. 143.

[52] Delaney, p. 31.

[53] Natural Supernaturalism, pp. 48-49.

[54] Natural Supernaturalism, p. 187.

[55] Natural Supernaturalism, pp. 188-89.

[56] Natural Supernaturalism, p. 185.

[57] The Central Self: A Study in Romantic and Victorian Imagination (London: The Athlone Press, University of London, 1968), p. 7.

[58] Coleridge as Philosopher (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1930), p. 229.

[59] "Circles," Essays: First Series, p. 304.

[60] Emerson, "Circles," p. 308.

[61] "Emerson and the Loneliness of the Gods," TSLL, XVI (1974), 68.

[62] "The Internalization of the Quest-Romance," Romanticism and Consciousness, p. 6.

[63] Poets of Reality, p. 3.

[64] The Quest for Permanence, pp. 24, 25.

[65] Movements of Thought in the Nineteenth Century, ed. M.H. Moore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944), pp. 82-83.

[66] Langbaum, The Poetry of Experience, p. 25.

[67] Ball, p. 2.

[68] Biographia Literaria, II, 20.

[69] The Romantic Survival: A Study in Poetic Evolution (London: Constable and Company, Ltd., 1957), p. 8.

[70] Frye, p. 33.

[71] Hartman, "Romanticism and 'Anti-Self-Consciousness,'" p. 51.

[72] Hartman, p. 51, pp. 55-56.

[73] Natural Supernaturalism, pp. 193-94.

[74] Hartman, p. 54.

[75] Quoted by Muirhead from the German, Coleridge as Philosopher, p. 202.

[76] Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, pp. 194, 195.

[77] Hartman, p. 54.

[78] Ball, The Central Self, p. 5.

[79] Letter to Clarkson, 1806; quoted by R.H. Fogle, *The Idea of Coleridge's Criticism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), p. 26.

[80] *The True Voice of Feeling*, p. 20.

[81] Herder's comment is cited by M.H. Abrams in *The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition* (1953; rpt. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1958), p. 227.

[82] *English Romantic Poetry*, p. 251.

[83] *Paradise Lost*, Book IX, ll. 21-24, *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957), p. 379.

[84] Hartman, P. 53.

[85] "Thoughts on Modern Literature," *Natural History of the Intellect and Other Papers*, ed. Edward Waldo Emerson (1904; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1968), p. 313.

[86] "Thoughts on Modern Literature," p. 313. The italics are Emerson's.

[87] *The American Renaissance*, p. 9.

[88] Matthiessen, pp. 8-9.

[89] "Thoughts on Modern Literature," pp. 314-15.

[90] "Self-Reliance," *Essays: First Series*, p. 45.

[91] Hartman, p. 52.

[92] Hartman, pp. 55-56.

[93] *The Statesman's Manual Or the Bible the Best Guide to Political Skill and Foresight*, 1816; rpt. in *Political Tracts of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley*, ed. R.J. White (Cambridge: Cambridge at the University Press, 1953), p. 27.

[94] *English Romantic Poetry*, p. 260.

[95] The Mirror and the Lamp, p. 173.

[96] Richard J. Jacobsen, Hawthorne's Conception of the Creative Process (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 4.

[97] "On Poesy or Art," Biographia Literaria, II, 258.

[98] The Mirror and the Lamp, pp. 173-74.

[99] Quoted by René Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950, I, 211.

[100] The Statesman's Manual, pp. 24-25.

[101] James V. Baker, The Sacred River: Coleridge's Theory of the Imagination (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), pp. 201-02. Cf. Patricia A. Ward, "Coleridge's Critical Theory of the Symbol," TSLL, 8 (1966-67), pp. 25-26.

[102] English Romantic Poetry, p. 241.

[103] The Mirror and the Lamp, p. 239.

[104] Herder's comment is cited by Abrams in The Mirror and the Lamp, p. 236.

[105] Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, pp. 239-40.

[106] Schleiermacher's comment is quoted by Rudolph Bultmann in "The Problem of Hermeneutics," Essays Philosophical and Theological (London: SCM Press, Ltd., n.d.), pp. 237-38.

[107] The Scarlet Letter, pp. 3-4.

[108] The Poetry of Experience, p. 35.

[109] The Scarlet Letter, p. 31.

[110] Symbolism and American Literature, p. 10.

[111] "The Old Manse," Mosses From An Old Manse (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1900), I, 43-44.

Chapter Three

[1] Merton M. Sealts Jr., Melville as Lecturer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 18.

[2] John D. Seelye, "The Structure of Encounter: Melville's Review of Hawthorne's Mosses," Melville and Hawthorne in the Berkshires: A Symposium, ed. Howard P. Vincent (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1968), p. 68. That in "Hawthorne and His Mosses" Melville speaks as much about himself and his own conception of art as about Hawthorne or Mosses From An Old Manse is an argument central to Lawrance Thompson's Melville's Quarrel With God. See particularly Thompson's introductory chapter, "To the Reader."

[3] Seelye, "The Structure of Encounter," p. 65; Dryden, Melville's Thematics of Form, pp. 22-23.

[4] "The Structure of Encounter," p. 65.

[5] "The Structure of Encounter," p. 68.

[6] The English Notebooks by Nathaniel Hawthorne, p. 432.

[7] The Example of Melville, p. 8, pp. 57-58.

[8] Berthoff, p. 57.

[9] Leyda, The Melville Log, II, 703-04.

[10] Leyda, The Melville Log, I, 209, 210, 211, pp. 210-11 and p. 212 respectively.

[11] Leon Howard, "Historical Note," Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 290. I am indebted throughout this discussion of the controversy surrounding the publication of Typee to Leon Howard's "Historical Note" and to Leyda's The Melville Log.

[12] William Braswell, Melville's Religious Thought: An Essay in Interpretation (1943; rpt. New York: Octagon Books, 1973), p. 8.

[13] Leyda, The Melville Log, I, 207-08.

[14] The Example of Melville, p. 12.

[15] Leyda, The Melville Log, I, 196.

[16] Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life, ed. Harrison Hayford, Hershel Parker and G. Thomas Tanselle (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. xiv. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Typee are from this edition, hereafter referred to as T. Subsequent references will be given in parentheses in the text.

[17] Melville: The Critical Heritage, ed. Watson G. Branch (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 8-9.

[18] Leyda, The Melville Log, I, 211, 214-15. Cf. Leon Howard's account in his "Historical Note," pp. 286-87.

[19] Leon Howard's assertion that "Typee [is], in fact, neither literal autobiography nor pure fiction" ("Historical Note," p. 291) is representative of the modern critical stance. Cf. Charles Roberts Anderson, Melville in the South Seas (1939; rpt. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966), pp. 179-95.

[20] Berthoff, p. 12.

[21] Letter to Dr. Trusler, August 23, 1799, The Letters of William Blake, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (1956; rpt. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1968), p. 29.

[22] Cf. Melville's own experiences as documented by Anderson in Melville in the South Seas, pp. 179-95.

[23] "Circles," Essays: First Series, p. 299.

[24] See, for example, Emerson's comments in his journal entry for July 26, 1819, The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson, I, 169; and Coleridge's remarks in The Table Talk and Omniana of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (London: Oxford University Press, 1917), p. 255.

[25] John Courtney Murray, S.J., The Problem of God Yesterday and Today (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), p. 16.

[26] The Mirror and the Lamp, p. 239.

[27] Melville's Use of the Bible (1949; rpt. Folcroft, Pa.: Folcroft Library Editions, 1972), p. 182.

[28] Wright, pp. 184-85.

[29] Selected Poems of Herman Melville: A Reader's Edition, ed. Robert Penn Warren (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 334.

[30] "The Structure of Encounter," p. 64. Concerning Melville's use of the pattern of the quest in his shorter fiction see Helmbrecht Breinig, "The Destruction of Fairyland: Melville's 'Piazza' in the Tradition of the American Imagination," ELH, 35 (1968), 254-83.

[31] Melville's Thematics of Form, p. 23.

[32] Probably the best-known statement of this view is made by Lawrance Thompson in Melville's Quarrel With God, p. 12.

[33] The Scarlet Letter, p. 3.

[34] "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye During a Tour, July 13, 1798," ll. 100-03, The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, ed. Ernest De Selincourt (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), II, 262.

[35] Wright, p. 182.

[36] Langbaum, The Poetry of Experience, p. 35.

[37] Warwick Waldington, "Ishmael's Godly Gamesomeness: Self-Taste and Rhetoric in Moby-Dick," ELH, 39 (1972), 330.

Chapter Four

[1] The Salt-Sea Mastodon, p. 46.

[2] Zoellner, p. 46.

[3] Thomas Edward Lucas, "Herman Melville: The Purpose of the Novel," TSLL, XIII (1972), 656.

[4] In Symbolism and American Literature Charles Feidelson Jr.

expresses a somewhat similar view, arguing that "the pattern of 'The Doubloon' is the scheme of the book"(p. 32).

[5] Zoellner, p. 52.

[6] That Ahab is, in some sense, a "tormented Narcissus" has been argued by at least two Melville commentators. See Thomas Woodson, "Ahab's Greatness: Prometheus as Narcissus," ELH, 33 (1966), 351-69; and Zoellner's chapter, "Ahab: The Ugly Narcissus," in The Salt-Sea Mastodon, pp. 91-117.

[7] "The Function of the Cetological Chapters in Moby-Dick," AL, 28 (1956), 173.

[8] The Trying-Out of Moby-Dick (1949; rpt. Arcturus Books, 1965, n.p.), p. 365.

[9] M.L. Ross, "Moby-Dick as an Education," Studies in the Novel, 6 (1974), 62-75.

[10] J.A. Ward, p. 177; Vincent, p. 126 et passim.

[11] "Experience," Essays: Second Series, p. 75.

[12] The Poets of Reality, p. 3.

[13] Ishmael's White World, pp. 128, 129.

[14] Zoellner, p. 11.

[15] "Moby-Dick: Work of Art," Moby-Dick: Centennial Essays, ed. Tyrus Hillway and Luther S. Mansfield (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1953), p. 48.

[16] Glauco Cambon, "Ishmael and the Problem of Formal Discontinuities in Moby-Dick," MLN, 76 (1961), 523.

[17] This point has been made by several scholars, among them Brodtkorb, pp. 123-24; and Dryden, Melville's Thematics of Form, p. 87.

[18] Brodtkorb, pp. 123-24.

[19] "Ishmael's Equal Eye: The Source of Balance in Moby-Dick," ELH, 32 (1965), 111-12.

[20] Yu, p. 112.

[21] Cambon, P. 523.

[22] Hartman, "Romanticism and 'Anti-Self-Consciousness,'" *Romanticism and Consciousness*, p. 54.

[23] "Herman Melville and the Problem of Moral Navigation," *Maule's Curse: Seven Studies in the History of American Obscurantism* (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1938); rpt. in Winters' *In Defense of Reason* (New York: Swallow Press, 1947), p. 200.

[24] Zoellner, p. 237.

[25] Zoellner, p. 219.

[26] Carl F. Strauch, "Ishmael: Time and Personality in *Moby-Dick*," *Studies in the Novel*, I (1969), 469.

[27] Zoellner, p. 225.

[28] Cambon, p. 518.

[29] Vincent, *The Trying-Out of Moby-Dick*, pp. 121 ff.

[30] Langbaum, *The Poetry of Experience*, p. 35.

[31] "The Shadow in *Moby-Dick*," *AQ*, XV (1963), 446.

[32] Hartman, p. 54.

[33] A great many scholars have, in recent years, focused attention on the meaning or meaninglessness of Ishmael's survival, among them: Granville Hicks, "A Re-Reading of *Moby-Dick*," *Twelve Original Essays on Great American Novels*, ed. Charles Sharpiro (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1958), pp. 67-68; Louis Leiter, "Queequeg's Coffin," *NCF*, XXII (1958), 249-54; Murray Kreiger, *The Tragic Vision* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), pp. 254-55, 257-58; H.C. Brashers, "Ishmael's Tattoos," *Sewanee Review*, LXX (1962), 137-54; Ted N. Weissbuch and Bruce Stillians, "Ishmael the Ironist: The Anti-Salvation Theme in *Moby-Dick*," *ESQ*, 31 (Second Quarter, 1963), 71-75; John Halverson, "The Shadow in *Moby-Dick*," *AQ*, XV (1963), 436-46; and William Rosenfeld, "Uncertain Faith: Queequeg's Coffin and Melville's Use of the Bible," *TSLL* 7 (1966), 317-27.

[34] Hartman, p. 54.

[35] Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism*, p. 194.

[36] *The Poetry of Experience*, pp. 35-36.

[37] The importance of the "surmise" in Romantic poetry is briefly discussed by Geoffrey Hartman in *Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787-1814* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), pp. 9-12. What Hartman states concerning the surmise in Romantic poetry is also true of its use in *Moby-Dick*: it "expresses the freedom of a mind aware of itself, aware and not afraid of its moods or potentialities"(p. 12).

[38] *Ishmael's White World*, p. 142 and p. 3.

[39] Zoellner, p. 205.

[40] "*Moby-Dick*: Work of Art," p. 56.

[41] Bezanson, p. 47.

[42] Brodtkorb, p. 141.

[43] Bezanson, p. 45.

[44] Yu, "Ishmael's Equal Eye: The Source of Balance in *Moby-Dick*," p. 121.

[45] Yu, p. 121.

[6] Brodtkorb, p. 148.

[47] M.L. Ross, "*Moby-Dick* as an Education," p. 74.

[48] See above p. 138.

[49] "Ishmael's Godly Gamesomeness: Self-Taste and Rhetoric in *Moby-Dick*," *ELH*, 39 (1972), 321-22.

[50] Waldington, p. 322.

[51] Waldington, p. 323.

[52] Waldington, p. 323.

Chapter Five

[1] "Melville and Transcendentalism," *Moby-Dick: Centennial Essays*, p. 145.

[2] For a summary of relevant scholarship, see Hershel Parker, "Melville's Satire of Emerson and Thoreau: An Evaluation of the Evidence," *ATQ*, 7 (Summer, 1970), 61-67.

[3] Feidelson, *Symbolism and American Literature*, p. 162.

[4] Frank G. Ryder and Bejamin Bennett, "The Irony of Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea*: Its Form and Function," *PMLA*, 90 (1975), 433.

[5] *The Subversive Vision: American Romanticism in Literature*, Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1972), pp. 14, 100.

[6] Hoffman, p. 90.

[7] Hoffman, p. 96.

[8] Miller, p. 150.

[9] "Ishmael's Godly Gamesomeness: Self-Taste and Rhetoric in *Moby-Dick*," *ELH*, 39 (1972), 330.

[10] *Ishmael's White World*, p. 148.

[11] *The Example of Melville*, p. 57.

[12] Berthoff, p. 54.

[13] Berthoff, p. 49.

[14] Hartman, "Romanticism and 'Anti-Self-Consciousness,'" *Romanticism and Consciousness*, p. 54.

[15] *The Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind*, Book XIII,

I. 65, ed. Ernest DeSelincourt, 2nd ed. rev. H. Darbishire (1933; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 230.

[16] Berthoff, p. 53.

[17] *Melville's Thematics of Form*, p. 129.

[18] *Melville: The Ironic Diagram*, p. 75.

[19] Feidelson, p. 201.

[20] Feidelson, p. 201.

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